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SOUTH ASIAN TEXTS IN HISTORY

Critical Engagements with Sheldon Pollock



Edited by

Yigal Bronner, Whitney Cox, Lawrence McCrea

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SHELDON POLLOCK

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For Shelly, with gratitude.

O de li altri poeti onore e lume
vagliami 'l lungo studio e 'l grande amore
che m' ha fatto cercar lo tuo volume.

Tu se' lo mio maestro e 'l mio autore
tu se' solo colui da cu' io tolsi
lo bello stilo che m' ha fatto honore.

The glory and light are yours,

That poets follow—may the love that made me search
Your book in patient study avail me, Master!
You are my guide and author, whose verses teach

The graceful style whose model has done me honor.

— Dante speaking of Virgil, *Inferno* 1.83–88, translation by Robert Pinsky

yaṃ vidma iti yadgranthān abhyāsyāmo 'khilān iti /
yasya śiṣyāḥ sma iti ca ślāghante svaṃ vipaścitaḥ //

"I know him."
"I read every letter in his books."
"I was his student."
See how scholars promote themselves.

— Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita speaking of Appayya Dīkṣita, *Gaṅgāvataraṇa*, 1.45

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Foreword

Nicholas Dirks

This volume is a fitting tribute to the scholarly breadth, erudition, originality, and commitment of Sheldon Pollock. A Sanskritist by training and disciplinary practice, Pollock has both given new meaning to this particular field of classical studies and made fundamental contributions to areas of study ranging far afield from Sanskrit proper. Extraordinary even among the already extraordinary tribe of Sanskritists, he has taken the study of Sanskrit to a new level, engaging historical, comparative, and theoretical issues with a range and sophistication that is unusual and in many respects unprecedented. It certainly was not something I would have anticipated while doing my own graduate work at the University of Chicago in the 1970s, when Sanskritists were seen as the repositories of a vast and foundational cultural lexicon that could provide the timeless meanings and key words for Indian civilization. The great Sanskritist W. Norman Brown played a critical role in founding South Asian studies in the United States, but his work, including his canonical book *The United States and India and Pakistan*,[1] betrayed an almost textbook case of orientalism.[2] Over the last several decades, Pollock has both delineated a new kind of historical understanding of and genealogy for Sanskrit and proposed the extent to which the history of Sanskrit provides the spine of a different kind of history of India, a history that features radical change, the rise of regional languages and literatures, the correlation between political power and cultural production, and finally, if arguably, the death of Sanskrit itself.

Pollock has been able to change the field of Sanskrit studies without abandoning deep philological interests and methods. While producing a constant stream of translations and critical editions, he has proposed for Sanskrit studies a new kind of critical philology deeply grounded in the study

of language and texts but imbricated in a larger field of cultural, historical, political, and social contexts and questions. His recent magnum opus, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India*, shows what critical philology entails and covers an almost astonishing array of issues, questions, texts, periods, places, and archives. The book begins with the constitution of Sanskrit as a political language under the Śakas at roughly the beginning of the common era. This was the moment when the sacerdotal origins of Sanskrit—the language of ritual and sacrifice, the language of Brahman *purohits* and pundits, the language of itinerant Aryan tribal groups who were slow to develop large-scale political institutions and aspirations—began to give way to new historical forces and uses.

Pollock demonstrates how Sanskrit emerged as a new kind of language, with a political will of its own, during the early centuries of the first millennium CE through two principal genres: *praśasti* and *kāvya*. *Praśasti*s were the prefatory poems and proclamations recorded on stone and copperplate inscriptions that were used by kings to express and extend their sovereignty and political regimes. Ritual contexts gave way to political concerns, and new kinds of texts were composed on a scale never before witnessed in South Asia. Political inscriptions record this outpouring of rhetorical claims to sovereignty and power, signaling new transregional forms of and claims to kingship and divinity. Sanskrit was the lingua franca for claims about sovereignty across the subcontinent, even in the Tamil country, where, in inscriptions dating at least from the early Pallava period, the practical details of endowments were delineated in a pragmatic Tamil after the prefatory *praśasti*. As Pollock puts it, "This was the way power spoke at every royal court for a millennium or more all across the Sanskrit cosmopolis," enhancing reality even as it transformed that reality in geopolitical terms.[3] The second genre was *kāvya*, or poetry. Pollock's first book had been on *kāvya*, and he shows us how the forms and embellishments of *kāvya* realize new generic conditions of possibility, most notably in that wonderful and extensive epic poem, the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki. Both genres played important roles in the establishment of royal courts and political systems that were organized in relation to a set of cosmopolitan coordinates and spheres that were vitally caught up in the facts of language itself. For Pollock, the facts of language included the ways in which a language of poetry and ritual became the vehicle for civilizational discourse to emerge with greater power, force, and geographical range than had previously been imagined possible.

If the combination of *praśasti* and *kāvya* engaged much of the linguistic terrain in these ways, the work of Sanskrit was carried much further through

the other great epic, the *Mahābhārata*, which became not just, as Pollock tells us, a "veritable language for talking about the world," but a "veritable library for the world."[4] Pollock writes, "Epic representations provided a template for structuring real political aspirations."[5] During the first millennium, the logic of the expansive cultural role for language was in part rooted in the way claims to universal sovereignty had to be made in a universal language. Sanskrit was not just in some way transgeographical, even transhistorical, but also the most significant and widely used vehicle to transcend local identities and affiliations. This is a breathtaking account of trends and trajectories across a large swath of history and the entire subcontinent, but then Pollock shows us the global dimensions of this history. After reconstructing through the career of Sanskrit the history of culture and power during the first millennium CE in India, he provides us with a comparative analysis of the Latinate world, showing how Latin achieved a similar kind of historical role across the Roman Empire, in what he calls the European Countercosmopolis.

If Sanskrit provided the epistemological, and for that matter technical, means to forge an enlarged idea of political sovereignty and community, linking a sense of the transcendental to the expansion of political aspirations in both genealogical and geographical respects, it began once again to undergo major structural change at the beginning of the second millennium CE. The universalism of the first millennium began increasingly to be mediated, and then challenged, as a result of the rise of what Pollock calls "vernacularization." Some of the earliest indications of this came from southern India, first in the Tamil country under the Cholas, then with Kannada, under the Rashtrakutas and later the Chalukyas. Under a new vernacular regime, Kannada was no longer merely a secondary language of bureaucratic detail and compliance—counting, measuring, particularizing, and sanctioning—but rather a primary language of expressive political discourse. Once again, Pollock shows us this process with broad historical sweep and immense subtlety—never making direct causal or unidimensional arguments—showing instead the multiple interconnections between new aesthetic and cultural sensibilities and new social and political worlds. And also once again, Pollock shows parallels with the European world, which during the same half millennium begins to betray a similar process of vernacularization, a process that begins to provide the linguistic and cultural infrastructure for the emergence of different political structures, the building blocks for the rise of nation-states, at least as they existed in the early modern European world before the next phase of nationalist developments in the eighteenth century.

The question of the "early modern"—the period of history that has variably

been periodized as the late medieval or "middle period" in the Indian case—hovers over the second half of Pollock's tome. For decades, historians of India used the category of medieval to represent the time of "Muslim" rule (from the so-called Sultanate period to the late Mughal), occasionally resorting to the notion of a middle period of history for, say, Bengal and the Deccan, where there was a multiplicity of political regimes. Using the term *early modern* assimilates Indian history into a larger, comparative, global history in which certain kinds of political transformations, cultural reconfigurations, social formations, and economic forces not only turn out to be more general but also more interconnected than we had previously thought.[6] As the term also proposes that the kinds of changes associated with modernity were anticipated, or prefigured, by earlier changes, it implies that India (or China) was no more locked into a timeless relationship to a premodern traditional past than Europe was. This last insight implies that the progression into modernity was arrested by forces that had nothing to do with earlier histories but with some other kind of realignment of historical forces specifically tied to the emergence of modern regimes themselves (such as, say, capitalism or colonialism or some combination of the two). While historians have increasingly embraced the historical periodization of the early modern for the Indian past, Pollock has shown what that would mean for our understanding of language form, literary production, and cultural transformation more generally.

A historian critical of the forms of colonial rule that played a significant role both in stalling and in introducing (through the representation of modernity as a specifically European import) the modern, Pollock has also been concerned for years that far too many of the interesting questions had been vacuumed up by colonial history and the study of colonial modernity in India. The problem was embedded in regnant historiographical assumptions in at least two respects, the first that students of premodern India were all too often wedded to the peculiar philological conviction that all the big issues of Indian civilization had been either anticipated or resolved in early texts, the second that students of modern India had largely ignored earlier historical periods and accepted a fundamentally colonial view that India had no real history, permeated as it was by traditional values, practices, and understandings until the colonial era. Pollock's signal influence on the field has been to contest both of these assumptions, and his success has been in part the result of his grounding in Sanskrit textual tradition and in part his brilliant demonstration—following the practices of critical philology—of the way in which Sanskrit itself not only has a history but allows unique insight into precisely the changes associated with early modernity by a broad group

of historians, whether they work on political economy or cultural and literary production. By taking onboard many of the questions, theoretical insights, and comparative frames of postcolonial historical thought, Pollock was further able to show how much more complicated, and complementary, the study of early modern, and modern, history should really be.

Pollock's book ends, unsurprisingly, with speculations about even bigger questions. What were the cultural, as well as political, effects of the expansion of Islam on India's western and eastern frontiers? How did the process of vernacularization connect to the history whereby Persian became the language of political will and transaction? What were the early modern forms of regional, linguistic, social, and cultural identity that might have predicated the emergence of an Indian nation, or something akin to that, had European colonialism not unfolded the way it did? What are the categories we can responsibly use, as historians and social critics, to address these questions? He asked all this with the underlying assumption that comparison is necessary, that there was no special deficiency, or excess, in South Asia that might fuel exceptionalist logics, whether driven by a condescending civilizationalism from the one side or a fundamentalist indigenism from the other. At the same time, he asked his questions with a relentless historicist insistence that neither ancient nor early modern historical anticipations or transformations did all the work of the modern, nor can they now be represented as somehow ahead of their time, markers of a timeless civilizational genius rather than particular signifiers that changed radically, first under conditions of expanding global capitalist exploration and exploitation and then under conditions of hegemonic colonial conquest, appropriation, and rule.

One of Pollock's most influential articles was mischievously entitled "The Death of Sanskrit."[7] Pollock succinctly makes his argument about the way the rise of vernacular languages and literary traditions began first to challenge and then increasingly to displace Sanskrit, even as Sanskrit began to be challenged by the spread and growing political significance of Persian. Tracing in this larger context the steady decline of literary innovation and vitality, he asks us to consider whether languages die long before they disappear and what kinds of circulatory and productive elements are necessary to sustain life, whether in speech or textual form. In this provocative essay, Pollock engages broad historical questions with his characteristic eloquence, erudition, and efficiency, and in raising a series of questions he makes one point very clearly. Whatever the life course of Sanskrit, the study of Sanskrit is hardly dead. Indeed, the work of Pollock's colleagues and students makes abundantly clear how vital and important the field is today. The present volume provides ample

evidence for this claim, but it also reveals that the work represented here is not just about Sanskrit, or for that matter language or literature in a narrow sense. The essays collected here take on Pollock's challenge to connect the study of language, culture, and power in larger historical contexts, with all the rigor, and care, of classical philology. Exemplary models of a new kind of cultural history, they provide a fitting tribute to the scholarship, teaching, and enduring intellectual influence of Sheldon Pollock.

Notes

[1] Brown 1963.

[2] See Dirks 2003.

[3] Pollock 2006: 146.

[4] Ibid., 225.

[5] Ibid., 237.

[6] See, for example, Subrahmanyam 2001.

[7] Pollock 2001: 392–426.

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Subrahmanyam, Sanjay. 2001. *Penumbral Visions: The Making of Polities in Early Modern South India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Preface to the South Asian Edition

It has been seven years since the conference celebrating the work of Sheldon Pollock was held at Columbia University, and four years since the publication of its proceedings as *South Asian Texts in History* by the Association of Asian Studies. Since then, we have received many requests from readers in India for copies of the book, and we are very pleased to now have the opportunity to make it available to them. This current volume is almost completely identical to the earlier edition; the only changes being the titles and positions of our contributors.

Sheldon Pollock, the honoree of our volume, remains a leader in the fields of Sanskrit philology, Indian intellectual and literary history, and comparative intellectual history. Now the Arvind Raghunathan Professor of South Asian Studies at Columbia University, Pollock has continued to produce innovative scholarship; he has also, very characteristically, been responsible for a number of new endeavours in collective publications. He himself has put forth major statements on the global history of philology, beginning with the widely-discussed essay 'Future Philology: the Fate of a Soft Discipline in a Hard World' (*Critical Inquiry*, 35:4, 2009, pp. 931-61) and resulting, most recently, in the edited volume *World Philology* (edited with Benjamin Elman and Kevin Chang, 2015). His critical perspective on the recognition of the 'classical' status of several Indian languages has resulted in interventions both scholarly ('Crisis in the Classics', *Social Research*, 78:1, 2011, pp. 21-48) and for the general public ('The Real Classical Language Debate', *The Hindu*, 27 November 2008). He has also produced a history of Sanskrit studies in the United States ('Sanskrit Studies in the US', in *Sixty Years of Sanskrit Studies, vol. 2: Other Countries*, ed. R. Tripathi, 2011, pp. 259-310). He now serves as the General Editor and guiding visionary behind the Murty Classical Library of India, and is the editor for a forthcoming series of readers in Sanskrit philosophy. His own contribution to this series, the much-anticipated *Reader on Rasa*, is scheduled to appear in late 2015. In recognition of his services to scholarship, Sheldon Pollock was awarded a Padma Shri by the Government of India in 2010.

We would like to thank the Association of Asian Studies' Asia Past and Present series, including the Publications Manager Jon Wilson, past series editor Martha Ann Selby and current series editor William Tsutsui for their help and support. We also thank the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen, for their renewed permission to make use of the images on the jacket of the book.

YIGAL BRONNER
WHITNEY COX
LAWRENCE MCCREA

Acknowledgments

This book began in conversations the three of us had among ourselves and with a few other former Pollock students—Prithvidatta Chandrashobhi and Parimal Patil deserve special mention here—as early as 2006. This initial brainstorming eventually led to a two-day conference held at Columbia University in February of 2008. The papers delivered at that memorable gathering form the backbone of this book.

The New York conference was made possible thanks to the dedicated help and generous support of several individuals and institutions. First and foremost, we wish to convey our gratitude to Akeel Bilgrami, whose Heyman Center for the Humanities hosted and sponsored the gathering, Columbia's South Asia Institute (SAI), then headed by Vidya Dehejia, which generously supported the event, and, of course, Nicholas Dirks, Executive Vice President for the Arts and Sciences at Columbia University, whose support for this project was crucial from the start. We are also indebted to the JJC Foundation and the Clay Sanskrit Library for their endorsement of the conference. Many special thanks go to Jonah Cardillo, Arthur Dudney, Eileen Gillooly, Elisa Kirchheim, Isabelle Onians, Zainab Mahmood, Anna Seastrand, and Somadeva Vasudeva, all of whom worked hard to make the conference possible and successful. We are also grateful to Muzaffar Alam, Arjun Appadurai, Akeel Bilgrami, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Philip Lutgendorf, and Christopher Minkowski, who enriched the conversations as discussants and participants in the roundtable discussion that concluded the event. Many special thanks go to Allison Busch for all of her assistance in arranging the conference at Columbia.

The making of this book was made a pleasant task thanks to the contributors themselves, whose cooperation with our editorial requests and quick time line were simply extraordinary. While working on this volume, we received much advice and encouragement from colleagues in our different institutions, including Wendy Doniger and James Nye at the University of Chicago. Many thanks go to Martha Selby, Jonathan Wilson, and Gudrun Patton of the Association for Asian Studies' "Asia Past & Present" series for their help in realizing this book. Finally, we wish to convey our deep gratitude to the two anonymous reviewers of this volume for their highly useful suggestions.

Before concluding we would like to comment on our personal experience of Sheldon Pollock as a teacher, a colleague, and a friend. Shelly has always fostered an intense and rigorous intellectual climate, while at the same time

remaining open to, and, in fact, eager for, criticism. The contributions in this volume, in their willingness to question and criticize aspects of his work, clearly grow out of and reflect this climate. It takes a certain kind of generosity of spirit to foster such a discussion, in which any argument is legitimate so long as it is well argued and properly substantiated. Indeed, we have come to benefit from Shelly's immense generosity in this and in many other ways, and our debt to him—intellectually and personally—is beyond repayment. Without his wise instruction, personal care, and inspiring example, our lives and careers would not have had the shape that they have.

Yigal Bronner
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Introduction

Yigal Bronner, Whitney Cox, and Lawrence McCrea

Indology has acquired a reputation for being old-fashioned: an antiquarian practice of poring over old crumbling texts and producing dry monographs of no interest to anyone but the initiate. For a field with such a long and distinguished intellectual pedigree, time seems to have stopped. For much of the previous century Indologists seemed to have gone about their scholarly business as if little had changed. They continued diligently to produce solid critical editions, comprehensive concordances, painstaking lexical studies, and faithful translations of a variety of texts. Few would look to this field to find intellectual excitement; for the most part, big questions about polity, society, and culture, or the status of the knowledge they produced, were simply never asked. Recently, however, this has begun to change, as a few scholars have sought to combine serious textual and philological work with broader reflections on literary and cultural theory and comparative cultural history. Among the most influential of these has been Sheldon Pollock, currently the William B. Ransford Professor of Sanskrit and Indian Studies at Columbia University.

Pollock's work has revolutionized both our understanding of the actual world of South Asian cultural practices in history and the vision of the proper methods and objectives of the field; it has also initiated a discussion of comparative cultural studies of premodern and early modern worlds. Two aspects of Pollock's work bear emphasis: first, the historical scope and linguistic breadth; and second, the way in which it has served as a catalyst within and about the field. With the recent publication of his magnum opus, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, Pollock's influence within and beyond the field of South Asian studies has risen to new heights and calls for a broad engagement with its methods and results and their implications for future study. This volume, then, represents a special moment in an ongoing conversation about the present status of our understanding of culture and power in South Asia and the direction in which future scholarship should

proceed. Taking his work as their point of departure, the studies in this volume seek to chart the newly altered terrain of the field.

For all the diversity of Pollock's interests and accomplishments, we can identify several key themes and methodological imperatives that are evident throughout his work so far. First and foremost, there is the persistent determination to historicize all things South Asian, even when the makers of some cultural products (and some Indologists too) seek to deny their historicity. Then there is the closely related insistence on the social and political valences of cultural production of all sorts. In pursuing these imperatives, Pollock has always maintained and propagated a highly unusual combination of philological rigor and sensitivity to large questions of social theory. As part of his theoretical engagement, Pollock has consistently maintained that the horizons of scholars of South Asia's past cannot be confined to South Asia or, for that matter, to the past. This principled dedication to studying and thinking comparatively has brought Pollock, and through him many other scholars, into conversations that reach across boundaries that have for too long divided discourse on premodern South Asia from that of the modern and the discourse on South Asian civilization from that of other world civilizations. In doing so, Pollock has successfully disturbed the complacent presuppositions of, on the one hand, Indologists who seem content to carry on their work in isolation from broader realms of scholarship and, on the other, scholars of colonial and postcolonial South Asia who feel no need to take into account things precolonial.

The extent to which these themes and imperatives have shaped both the work of Pollock himself and that of his students and colleagues can be seen in the following studies. They address many aspects of Pollock's ongoing work, which are here grouped into five broad areas: the study of the Sanskrit epic *Rāmāyaṇa* and its continuing legacy, the origins and development of Sanskrit literature and its attendant ideology, language choice and the entrance into history of literatures in India's vernacular languages, Sanskrit's distinctive codification of knowledge and human practices under the rubric of *śāstra*, and finally the question of an early modernity taking shape in South Asia prior to its colonization by European powers and epistemes. Below we summarize Pollock's contributions to each of these areas and briefly sketch the manner in which the contributors to this volume respond to, extend, and in some cases criticize them.

Part One. The *Rāmāyaṇa* and Its Readers

As a young scholar who had only recently completed his doctoral dissertation, Pollock was invited by Robert Goldman to participate in the project to translate the entirety of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, Sanskrit's "'primordial poem'" or *ādikāvya*. This marked the beginning of Pollock's decades-long engagement with the monumental work, which has proven itself one of his most persistent and important areas of interest. The results of this have been many and various, ranging from assessments of the critically constituted text published from Baroda to pathbreaking essays of interpretative criticism on Vālmīki's text (e.g., Pollock 1981, 1983, 1984a, 1984b, and 1984c, not to mention the two translated volumes, Pollock 1986 and 1991). The evidence of Pollock's unique contributions to the study of the Rāma story can be seen all the way up to his most recent publications; in major sections of his magnum opus, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*; and in his masterful edition and translation of Bhavabhūti's play *Uttararāmacarita*, or *Rāma's Last Act* (Pollock 2006, 2007b).

Pollock's recurrent attention to Vālmīki's text has centered on the aesthetic, social, and historical questions raised by the *Rāmāyaṇa*, especially the fundamentally moral and political vision embodied in its narrative and its foundational place in Indian literary history. From its inception, Western Indology has tended to view the *Rāmāyaṇa* as a composite work containing a series of irreconcilable narrative and thematic elements, the remains of various historical strata in the evolution of the text. But for readers over many centuries in South Asia, this monumental text has always been understood as the coherent creation of a single author. While Pollock has been acutely aware of the evolution and expansion of the work over time, one of his most profound and far-reaching contributions to the study of the *Rāmāyaṇa* has been to establish on text-critical grounds the necessity of taking seriously this emic understanding of a unified *Rāmāyaṇa*. In so doing, he has been able to both analytically distinguish and think together the genetic and receptive histories of the text.

The *Rāmāyaṇa*'s unparalleled significance in South Asian cultural history can be gauged in part by the enormous commentarial literature that developed around it. A key element in Pollock's analysis of these commentaries is not to regard them as simply passive reflections of the poem's "'native'" understanding but instead as complex intentional acts with their own specific agendas, be they exegetical, religious, aesthetic, or political. Pollock's approach to the receptive history of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, while making serious and critical use of this

literature, extends considerably beyond it to include poems and plays based on the Rāma story but also epigraphic texts and monumental temple architecture and other forms of public and political action, seeking to understand these as forms of *Rāmāyaṇa* commentary in and of themselves. The understanding of such public uses of the *Rāmāyaṇa* took on a new urgency in 1992 with the destruction of the Babri Masjid and the ensuing communal violence. In the wake of these events, the scholarly understanding of the poem could for Pollock no longer be of strictly philological or literary-historical value, as the politics of Rāma became a critical issue in the public life of India and the global South Asian diaspora. Pollock's "*Rāmāyaṇa* and Political Imagination in India" (1993a) provided the first occasion for him to intervene into these debates, in a typically Pollockian manner, by charting the longer history of the Rāma story's deployment against the Muslim other.

All three essays in part 1 approach the *Rāmāyaṇa* from within the problematics charted by Pollock over the course of his long and productive engagement with the text and its ongoing role in the literary and political cultures of South Asia. It is no exaggeration to say that the way in which these essays deal with the receptive history of the text is indeed only possible because of Pollock's remaking of the field of *Rāmāyaṇa* studies.

Ajay K. Rao's contribution maps out some of the ways in which the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the figure of Rāma were deployed in sectarian contestation in late medieval South India. Rao takes as his critical point of departure Pollock's 1993 essay, which demonstrated that the salience of the Rāma cult in South Asian culture coincided with the emerging dominance of Islam as a cultural and political force in the subcontinent. Calling the universal applicability of this model into question, Rao argues that Hindu-Muslim conflict was not the sole motive for the elevation of Rāma and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but that the *Rāmāyaṇa* narrative played a major role in an intra-Hindu competition as well. More specifically, he argues that it was actually local sectarian political dynamics that propelled the elevation of the cult of Rāma in the Vijayanagara empire in southern India in the sixteenth century. Under the patronage of a particular dynasty, the Sāḷuvas, and shepherded by the adherents of the Śrīvaiṣṇava order, the cult of Rāma was transformed into Vijayanagara's state religion at the expense of the Śaiva faith patronized by earlier kings. Rao's analysis reveals the striking fact that the *Rāmāyaṇa*, despite its being a narrative of an incarnation of the god Viṣṇu, had not been seen prior to this period as an exclusively sectarian, Vaiṣṇava text. Indeed, it seems that it is precisely as a consequence of the medieval and early modern sectarian contestation over the *Rāmāyaṇa* that Rāma rose to prominence as a cultic figure in South India.

Yigal Bronner's contribution focuses on a text that belongs to the same geographical, political, and cultural milieu as Rao's Śrīvaiṣṇava commentators and further confirms the centrality of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in sectarian disputes. The *Rāmāyaṇatātparyasārasaṅgrahastotra*, a summary of the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s intended essence in the form of a hymn to God, is a text written by Appayya Dīkṣita (1520–92), one of the most prominent public intellectuals of the period. Countering the attempts to read the *Rāmāyaṇa* as a text with a Śrīvaiṣṇava theological message, Appayya argues quite startlingly that it is, in fact, a Śaiva text, designed to covertly suggest the supremacy of the god Śiva. Despite the shocking conclusion that Appayya draws from the text of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Bronner shows that his central argument presupposes and reaffirms the narrative and logical unity of Vālmīki's poem that Pollock has urged. Indeed, Appayya's reading hinges on the premise that the actions and words of the characters must show logical consistency throughout the text and that every apparent inconsistency must be indicative of a hidden explanation in the overall framework. Appayya's close reading of the poem displays both the great faithfulness and the tremendous originality that is the hallmark of the *Rāmāyaṇa* interpretive tradition at its best. In the boldness and erudition with which he approaches the text, Appayya represents something of a limit case in displaying both the central importance of the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s unity for its interpreters and the fact that their interpretations were not merely passive reflections of a static tradition but consequential interventions in ongoing literary, political, and religious struggles.

Finally, in his contribution to this volume, Robert Goldman, editor and principal translator of the Princeton *Rāmāyaṇa* project, sets out four interpretative frameworks for the *Rāmāyaṇa* that have shaped readerly expectations since at least the twelfth century of the common era, the period of the earliest surviving commentarial literature: the poem's aesthetic value, its moral lessons, its religious teachings, and its status as a record of historical fact. These parameters were not treated as discrete by premodern readers, who combined these four perspectives in an effort to demonstrate the text's narrative and conceptual coherence. Goldman casts a revealing light on the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s reception and its central role in Indian culture and ideology by drawing out lines of continuity between the interpretive concerns and practices of the text's medieval commentators and the "Expert Nation" of its modern Indian interpreters. He shows, in particular, how the persistent sense that the *Rāmāyaṇa* must be read as an aesthetic model, a reliable guide to morals and theology, and, perhaps above all, an accurate historical account has driven and shaped the hermeneutic strategies of its premodern and modern interpreters,

including those discussed in Rao's and Bronner's essays.

Part Two. *Kāvya*: Sanskrit Literary Culture in History

Pollock's interest in Sanskrit literary history hardly ends with the *Rāmāyaṇa*, traditionally recognized as that history's moment of inception. The development of Sanskrit literary culture and the idea of the literary itself have occupied Pollock throughout his career, from his doctoral dissertation on Sanskrit metrics (published as Pollock 1977) to his recent role as the general editor of the Murthy Classical Library of India series. These two projects define the contours of Pollock's engagement with *kāvya*, Sanskrit belles lettres. On the one hand, the dissertation, with its close attention to subtle changes in poets' metrical techniques, represents his deep philological and historical perspective. His work as both editor and translator (which includes, in addition to his translations of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Uttararāmacarita*, a substantial contribution to the *Longman Anthology of World Literature* [Damrosch 2004]) on the other hand, illustrates his ongoing attempt to bring *kāvya* to the attention of larger audiences in the academy and beyond. One of Pollock's most far-reaching insights into the position of *kāvya* in South Asian textual culture concerns its historical origin and development and its social location. In opposition to standard scholarly accounts, both in India and elsewhere, which have tended to argue for or assume the great antiquity and static character of *kāvya*, tracing it back even to the Vedic scriptures, Pollock stresses its sudden and late emergence and the radical rupture it represents with the earlier liturgical corpus of the Veda. If prior to the onset of the first millennium CE, Sanskrit was used exclusively for Vedic ritual and the disciplines that were related to or grew out of it, Pollock argues, Sanskrit was now reinvented as the medium for poetic and political expression and assertion. Moreover, this transformation was wrought not by participants in the Brahmanical social order, who had up until that time effectively monopolized the use of Sanskrit, but by people heterodox in their religious identity and in many cases newcomers to the South Asian political-cultural domain, especially migrants from Central Asia. Further, these new developments took shape not in communities of Brahmins, but in royal courts, beginning with that of the Śaka monarch Rudradāman the great inscriptional praise poem in whose honor (ca. 150 CE) is for Pollock the harbinger of a massive transformation in Sanskrit's public career (e.g., Pollock, 2003a, 2006).

This sudden emergence of a wholly new mode of poetic consciousness radically transformed the literary, aesthetic, and political landscape of South and Southeast Asia. In the space of less than a century, royal courts throughout

northern India adopted this new, thoroughly Sanskritic idiom of public self-presentation and self-understanding. Over the next few centuries this cultural formation was adopted throughout southern India and nearly all of Southeast Asia. This vast cosmopolis, as Pollock has termed it, was not tied to any religious movement or imperial formation, and so it stands apart from the other transregional cosmopolitan orders of the premodern world. Rather, what tied this global formation together was a set of textual and cultural practices codified by a corpus of cultural grammars. These include, first and foremost, texts such as Śarvavarman's *Kātantra*, which defined Sanskrit, literally the "refined" mode of speech, and governed the linguistic expressions of the courtly elite, as well as other authoritative texts designed to determine the full range of cultivated human behavior, ranging from the sexual to the political, moral, and literary/aesthetic.

Many of Pollock's key insights into the cultural world of the cosmopolis center around the role of poetry and aesthetic theory in propagating a specific social, political, and moral ideal. Most typically centered on the person of the king as the paragon of artful speech, moral action, and scientific knowledge, this model is found in inscriptions and literary representations throughout the cosmopolis, beginning with the stone-inscribed eulogy of Rudradāman and culminating in the persona and works of the famous king Bhoja of Dhārā (r. 1015–48), who occupies a special place in Pollock's work (e.g., Pollock 1998b, 2001c). Pollock has not only described the vast dimensions of the literary output of this cultural sphere, but he has also pointed out that for nearly a millennium Sanskrit monopolized almost all forms of artistic and intellectual production to the exclusion of local or vernacular languages. This is very clearly seen in his study of stone and copperplate inscriptions, where Sanskrit alone was used for the imaginative and literary portions, most typically the ornate depiction of the king or patron, while vernacular languages, if they were used at all, were limited to a purely documentary function, specifying the mundane details of land grants or tax exemptions. By and large, this division of labor persisted until the early second millennium CE, when, as we shall see, vernacular languages challenged the dominance of Sanskrit in the literary/aesthetic domain.

The three essays in part 2 deal with different aspects of Pollock's multifaceted engagement with Sanskrit literary culture. Xi He's essay deals with one of the earliest manifestations of a particular Sanskrit literary form, prose-*kāvya*, locating its origin in the *Lalitavistara*, an early Mahāyāna narrative of the life of the Buddha. Prior studies of the *Lalitavistara* have treated it primarily as a religious text, ignoring its literary dimension. As

shown by He, this text played an important and hitherto unnoticed role in the development of Sanskrit literary forms, in particular through its deployment of ornate descriptive prose passages as a vehicle for aesthetic intensification. He's analysis demonstrates the usefulness of Pollock's model: the *Lalitavistara* coincides in time with Rudradāman's inscription and, as she shows, displays remarkable similarity in the stylistic features of its prose. Moreover, it provides yet another example of a literary development in Sanskrit that takes place outside of the Vedic fold. And, in the rapidity and geographic breadth of its spread, which extends as far as China, the *Lalitavistara* reveals the extent to which the emerging cosmopolitan Sanskrit literary models were appreciated and adopted. It is clear from He's analysis that the text's prose, with its extended strings of long compounds arranged on a minimal syntactic frame and embedding complex figurative devices, is the direct harbinger of the fully developed prose style of such later masters as Subandhu and Bāṇa.

Sudipta Kaviraj's essay deals with the *Mahābhārata*, the other great epic of India, which, unlike the *Rāmāyaṇa*, stands in a somewhat problematic relationship to the later literary tradition. The *Mahābhārata*, with its intense exploration of political and intrafamilial violence and the insoluble moral dilemmas associated with it, stands in stark contrast to the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s idealized social, moral, and political order that, as Pollock has shown, later *kāvya* prototypically sought to propagate (Pollock 2006 primarily discusses the *Mahābhārata* in the context of its mapping of the political-cultural realm of the Sanskrit cosmopolis). Kaviraj shows how the poetic theorists of ninth- and tenth-century Kashmir dealt with this tension by trying to create a space within their theory of emotional response to allow the *Mahābhārata* to still be "dark" in its moral vision and yet be embraced as *kāvya*. These theorists, in fact, radically reimagined a category of emotional response to literature, "the calm" (*śānta*), to make room for the sense of worldly despair that comes from reading the *Mahābhārata*, a response that is now seen as an impetus to renounce worldly affairs.

Jesse Ross Knutson's essay deals with Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda* (ca. 1200), a work composed at a time when Sanskrit's hegemony in the literary domain was beginning to erode and at the dawn of what Pollock has called "the vernacular millennium." Beginning around the end of the first millennium of the common era, and throughout the cosmopolitan space once monopolized by Sanskrit, local languages were transformed into vehicles of courtly literary expression, most often through wholesale borrowing and adaptation of the expressive resources of Sanskrit. Knutson demonstrates that the *Gītagovinda*, a product of the literary salon of the eastern king Lakṣmaṇasena, while

composed exclusively in Sanskrit, can be seen to participate in this process, both through its innovative use of patently non-Sanskritic rhymed metrical forms (adapted, it seems, from Apabhraṃśa or vernacular prototypes) and in its new presentation of the erotic idylls of the god Kṛṣṇa. Strikingly, the later reception of Jayadeva's poem tended to associate it with vernacular religious enthusiasm, particularly with the much later Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava movement of Caitanya (ca. 1486–1533 CE). Knutson, by contrast, seeks to reinterpret Jayadeva as a poet of the court, looking at the larger body of work attributed to him in the anthologies as well as the intertextual linkages between the *Gītagovinda* and other contemporary works, especially the *Āryāsaptaśatī* of Govardhana. Both of these poets, Knutson concludes, can best be understood in light of the profound political and ideological crisis of Sena kingship, leading up to its collapse in the wake of the incursions of Muhammad bin Bakhtyar Khaljī in 1204. Picking up a theme that is central to Pollock's work, Knutson shows that Sanskrit literature can and must be understood in light of its worldly situation.

Part Three. The Vernacular and the Cosmopolitan

Central to Pollock's analysis of the dynamics of language and culture in South Asia is his insistence that one must pay attention to the critical issue of language choice in the always evolving context of competing literary cultures. This has enabled him to theorize for the first time the ways in which the long period of Sanskrit dominance ended and an entirely new linguistic economy was created in South Asia, in the vernacular millennium. For Pollock, then, the emergence of vernacular literary cultures and what he sees as the eventual demise of Sanskrit cannot and should not be seen as a natural process wherein the "daughter" languages replace their aging "mother" or wherein the "language of the people" replaces the "decadent" idiom of the elite. Rather, he argues that the process of vernacularization must be viewed as a deliberate act of court intellectuals, working in the context of emerging regional polities and consciously shaping their own literary universes in emulation of the Sanskrit cosmopolitan model. While Pollock does not offer any one conclusive explanation as to why this amazing linguistic transformation occurred when it did, he does note the remarkable parallels between this and the concurrent process of vernacularization that took place in Europe. Moreover, he decisively rejects the oft-cited explanation that links the rise of the vernacular to the growth of popular religious movements centered around the notion of personal devotion to God (*bhakti*). In effect, then, Pollock reverses the widespread notion that the vernacular literatures somehow gave voice to

nonelite and more "democratic" cultural forms. Indeed, he shows that the rise of these literatures was driven by the very same elites who embodied Sanskrit culture and that these literatures became literary precisely by imagining themselves as local versions of the cosmopolitan model. Thus, the "vernacular revolution" Pollock speaks about at least initially led to a situation in which both Sanskrit and local literary languages were supported by the same patrons and existed in a deeply intertextual relationship.

Pollock began to chart this process of massive and consequential cultural transformation through his study of Old Kannada, one of South Asia's richest and least-studied premodern literatures. This led to series of seminal studies, including "The Sanskrit Cosmopolis, 300–1000: Transculturation, Vernacularization, and the Question of Ideology" (Pollock 1996), "The Cosmopolitan Vernacular" (Pollock 1998c), and "India in the Vernacular Millennium" (Pollock 1998a), and—perhaps most significantly for the wider field—to the genesis of the collective project under his editorship, *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia* (Pollock 2003b). This volume, unprecedented in its scope and ambition, brought together a group of scholars with diverse linguistic, historical, and theoretical outlooks who each examined, sometimes for the very first time, the origin, evolution, and some of the basic features of one major literature in South Asia. In the wake of this collective project, Pollock, in his *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, offered an overarching framework within which the phenomena of cosmopolitanism and vernacularization can be theorized comparatively, both within South Asia and globally. Pollock's model here—as with other examples of the best sort of social theory—is schematic, deliberately meant to be tested against other empirical studies: it raises new questions and allows scholars to look at their materials in a new light and so to return critically to the theory itself. All three authors of the essays in part 3 do just that: taking Pollock's model of the cosmopolitan-vernacular dynamic as a starting point for their research and interrogating the model's presuppositions and conclusions.

Blake Wentworth takes up one of Pollock's most powerfully argued conclusions—that what Pollock dubs "linguism," the putatively primordial linkage of language and ethnic community, is entirely a product of modernity's revision of the more porous and voluntaristic cultural worlds of earlier centuries. While acknowledging the overall applicability of Pollock's argument, Wentworth systematically demonstrates that in one crucial case—that of Tamil—the connection between speech-form and regional and ethnic collective identity possesses a deep history. It needs to be said that Tamil, with its prodigiously long literary history, has always presented a serious anomaly

for Pollock's model, something that he has acknowledged. Tamil's literary culture by most accounts began centuries earlier than that of any other regional literature, and it was not formed in obvious imitation of the cosmopolitan Sanskrit model. Wentworth suggests that the Tamil case may differ also in terms of the way language and identity have been related in its premodern texts. He shows the ways in which something like "linguism" has been manifest in the Tamil corpus from a very early point and has perdured, in different forms, down to the modern era. He argues that even in the imagination of the Śaiva *bhakti* hymnists of the seventh and eighth centuries CE, Tamil had already become a marker of ethnic identity and that, moreover, these texts posited a significant overlap between being Tamil and being Śaiva, thereby linking language choice to religious identity, something equally denied in Pollock's model. This ideological nexus of ethnicity, language, and religion continued to inform public life in the far South into the colonial period, for evidence of which Wentworth instances the celebrated opening to the *Manōnmaṇīyam* of P. Cuntaram Piḷḷai (1855–97), and indeed into the present.

Whitney Cox outlines the surprisingly intense connections between the Sanskrit culture of the northern valley of Kashmir and the far southern peninsula during the period of vernacular ascendancy in the early second millennium CE. Cox details the ways in which southern literati writing especially in Sanskrit, but also in Kannada and Tamil, not only were attuned to the works emerging from the enormously influential world of Kashmiri Sanskrit but were actively engaged in a process of recasting and even rewriting their northern models. In this Cox superimposes on Pollock's "satellite picture" of the Sanskrit cosmopolis a more detailed network of material-cultural circulations and interactions, providing a set of empirical controls on Pollock's claim about the transition to more circumscribed vernacular polities in the period. Cox concentrates on the level of the individual textual detail—borrowings and recastings of Kashmiri Sanskrit within the very different cultural and institutional order of the far South. This microlevel perspective permits us to see a consequential cultural transformation at first hand, and to look at contemporaneous changes in social and even political history with fresh eyes. He furthermore demonstrates that the southern reception and reimagination of Kashmiri Sanskrit across a range of genres—from logic and literary theory to Tantric ritual works—did not take place solely within the royal courts, which are for Pollock the principal agents of meaningful cultural production, but in a range of social locales, including monastic institutions, *agrahāra*s (Brahmanical landed estates), and individual households.

Allison Busch's contribution is a bold attempt to rethink the history of

Hindi literary culture in light of Pollock's model and to examine and refine the model in the process. She argues that Hindi literature is not easily defined as one tradition and, as such, may have more than one beginning or at least several contenders for its moment of origin. Busch surveys several such starts and false starts and concludes that Hindi literature has at least two beginnings, one of which conforms very closely to the expectations generated by Pollock's model, while the other diverges sharply from them. It is the second of these that is actually chronologically earlier: the Sufi Premākhyan literature written in Avadhī, and in particular Maulana Daud's *Caṇḍāyan* (1379), which Busch identifies as the best candidate for the first Hindi *kāvya*. This, however, was a work composed outside courtly circles, religiously motivated, and conspicuously avoiding any cosmopolitan model, whether Sanskritic or Persianate. By contrast, the Braj poetry of authors like Keshav Das from the early seventeenth century fit perfectly with Pollock's predictions, in that they are courtly works, largely secular in outlook, and modeled closely on Sanskrit *kāvya*. Busch further demonstrates that the earliest self-conscious imagination of a Hindi literary canon (beginning in the eighteenth century) gave prominence to this second moment, with the addition of devotional authors such as Surdas and Tulsidas, in conceiving of its own origins. Literary-historical consciousness, as Busch shows, is inevitably retrospective in terms of both its inclusions and exclusions.

Part Four. *Śāstra*: Sanskrit Systems of Knowledge in (and outside) History

A series of articles written by Pollock beginning in the mid-1980s and continuing over the next decade (e.g., Pollock 1985, 1989a, 1989b, 1989c, 1997), charting the unique importance of *śāstra* for South Asian intellectual and cultural history, is the point of departure for the following three essays. *Śāstra*, what Pollock originally referred to as "cultural grammars," and what in his later writings would be described with the label "knowledge systems," forms a massive body of Sanskrit texts whose object is to describe, prescribe, and govern in minute detail the entire range of human practices from language utterances and epistemology to theft, elephant training, and sex. Pollock was perhaps the first Indologist to seriously confront the interlinked questions of why these texts existed at all and how they came to exercise such a commanding influence in South Asian civilization. These questions led him to reflect on the origin and growth of this genre and to explore its history. In doing so, he not only swam against the tide of modern Indological scholarship, but he also labored against the prevailing self-conception of the creators and users of

śāstric texts in premodern India. This is because, as Pollock argued, the śāstric texts presented themselves as standing outside history and as deriving their authority from an ultimately eternal and uncreated source.

The basic paradigm for this self-presentation was supplied by the analysis of the unique textual status of the Vedic scriptures put forth by their most influential interpreters, the Mīmāṃsā school of hermeneutics. The Mīmāṃsā position was that the utterances that make up the Veda are literally eternal, uncreated by any agent, human or divine. It is further argued that it is for precisely this reason that the authority of the Veda, understood above all as a set of commands enjoining ritual performance, must be accepted. This Mīmāṃsā model of textual authority, Pollock has shown, gradually came to be generalized to cover a range of prescriptive texts, which expanded beyond the sacerdotal to include an ever wider spectrum incorporating even the most everyday human activities. All of these texts, placing themselves within the genre of *śāstra*, sought to legitimate themselves by claiming to be based on lost or otherwise inaccessible Vedic scriptures, thus linking themselves to the Veda's transhistorical nature, and so necessarily prior to any instance of the human activity they describe. Theory was thought invariably to precede practice.

Lawrence McCrea's contribution to this volume explores the usefulness of this model and the limits of its application. While accepting the general cultural prevalence of the model of eternal knowledge that Pollock proposes, McCrea shows that elements of historical consciousness and practice-driven theoretical innovation were not just possible for a *śāstra*, but regularly occurred within the discourse on literary theory (Alaṃkāraśāstra). Pollock himself has written extensively on the problems of Sanskrit poetics and the history of Sanskrit literature, and we have already referred to some of this literature. McCrea, discussing major theorists such as Ānandavardhana, Ruyyaka, and Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja, argues that the self-conscious innovation in the domain of poetic practice that Pollock has demonstrated applies to poetic theory as well. This detailed exploration of Pollock's thesis within a specific domain can serve as a lens through which the model of the transcendent *śāstra* can be further interrogated, extended, and refined.

A major component of Pollock's argument for śāstric transcendence is the analysis of its ideological role in the naturalization of Brahmanically ordained social practices. Far from being the product of an otherworldly scholasticism, the śāstric textual order is deeply implicated in the reproduction of unequal relations of power in premodern South Asia (e.g., Pollock 1985, 1993b). As such, Pollock's model applies primarily to the orthodox *śāstra*s—those disciplines

that accept the authority of the Vedic revelation—as he himself has noted. Dan Arnold in his essay looks at the arguments between Buddhist theorists such as the renowned logicians Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti and the Mīmāṃsā defenders of Brahmanical orthodoxy. Taking Pollock's own discussion of naturalization as a point of departure, Arnold reconstructs the debate as to whether the relations between words and their referents are natural and eternal, as Mīmāṃsākas contend, or the result of human convention, as Buddhists assert. Arnold argues that the contours of this debate are not wholly reducible to ideology. While acknowledging the social agendas of the participants, he maintains that there are serious philosophical issues at stake and therefore that this debate has serious relevance to contemporary controversies in the philosophies of mind and language. One of Arnold's noteworthy conclusions is that the seemingly counterintuitive Mīmāṃsā argument that language must always preexist any community of speakers resonates in significant ways with current positions on the locus of intentionality. This connection between premodern Indic and contemporary philosophical debates serves to highlight another of Pollock's critically important (if little discussed) scholarly projects, that of advocating the place that many different Sanskritic discursive forms merit within contemporary intellectual life.

The role of *śāstra* in the naturalization of social practices is further explored in Guy Leavitt's essay. Leavitt responds to an important theme in Pollock's various studies of the *śāstra* governing literary practice and aesthetic experience. Pollock has done much to highlight aspects of Sanskrit poetics that have been largely neglected by earlier scholarship, especially in two major articles focusing on the work of the eleventh-century central Indian king Bhoja (Pollock 1998b, 2001c). Pollock argues that Bhoja's work represents the culmination of a major strand of aesthetic theory, which has come to be overshadowed by the reader-oriented model of aesthetics developed in Kashmir, most notably by Abhinavagupta, at about the same time. In fact, Pollock radically rereads Bhoja's massive treatise as proposing a theory according to which the locus of a work's emotional flavor, or *rasa*, is not the reader but the principal character portrayed (1998b). This character-centered model of emotional content is, Pollock argues, crucial to the socially normative function of literature as understood by Bhoja, for whom the emotional experience of characters such as Rāma functions didactically as a model for emulation. Pollock sees in the contemporary Kashmiri development of a reader-oriented aesthetic a shift within theory away from concern with the social function of literature. It is to this point that Leavitt's essay principally responds, by arguing that even in Kashmir considerations of the

social remained crucial to poetic theory. While acknowledging Pollock's point that the implied social text is seldom explicitly addressed by the Kashmiri theorists in the suggestion of narrative elements (*vastudhvani*), Leavitt demonstrates that in the categorically central domain of the suggestion of aestheticized emotion (*rasa*), the social and moral dimensions of literature remain crucial. In particular, the notion of *aucitya*, or propriety, as it relates to the hierarchy of high, middling, and low character types, supplies for these critics the foundation for the aesthetic intelligibility of the characters' actions. Correlatively, the mismatch between emotional response and character type produces in the reception-centered theory a cognitive and aesthetic dissonance, invalid emotion (*rasābhasa*). In Abhinavagupta's enormously influential opinion, this emotional dissonance, too, has a socially and morally didactic function since, when it occurs, the spectator's original sympathetic response is sublated by an emotional awareness that brings to consciousness the response's impropriety, in contrast to the fundamentally unselfconscious awareness of *rasa*. Here Leavitt, like McCrea and Arnold, while taking issue with the substance of Pollock's particular argument, nevertheless makes clear the continuing importance of Pollock's theorization of *śāstra*, since he operates within a discursive framework that would not be possible without Pollock's conceptualization of the relevant problematics.

Part Five. Early Modernity

Just as Pollock has provocatively explored the beginnings of Sanskrit textual practices, in the same way his more recent work has sought to make sense of what arguably constitutes their end. Pollock's position here is complex, both in terms of the widely divergent stances it seeks to refute and in terms of the nuanced picture with which it aims to replace them. To begin with, here, too, he has been swimming against the tide of Western and Indian scholars, many of whom bear a strong bias toward the valorization of the old. Indeed, by focusing attention, in some sense for the first time, on what was new in the Sanskrit expression of the late medieval and early modern period, Pollock refutes the widespread assumption that Sanskrit literary and intellectual culture was essentially static, lacking any meaningful historical development. At the same time, by insisting that Sanskrit as a medium for literary and scholarly expression has at some point lost its vitality, Pollock takes issue with those who continue to believe that Sanskrit is perennially relevant and thus stands above or outside history. In terms of the argument itself, Pollock distinguishes between the fate of Sanskrit as a vehicle for poetic and political imagination and its fate as the language of scientific analysis. In the case of the

former, Pollock argues that with the rise of the vernaculars, which happened at different times in different places, the formerly cosmopolitan idiom of Sanskrit gradually lost its energy and effectively died as a medium of socially relevant expression (2001a). As for the latter, however, Pollock has argued that in the final period of Sanskrit's life as a medium of intellectual expression we find not senescence but a virtual renaissance. In a series of groundbreaking publications (2001b, 2004b, 2005, and 2007a, among others), Pollock has sought to show that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed a sudden and striking transformation in both the forms and the substance of a wide range of Sanskrit scientific and intellectual disciplines. Indeed, in addition to his own work on this topic, Pollock initiated and led another major collaborative research project, "Sanskrit Knowledge Systems on the Eve of Colonialism." This collective effort has inspired a flurry of publications on the virtually unstudied early modern period of Sanskrit systematic thought, and information about these publications can be found on the group's website, www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pollock/sks/papers/.

From the very outset of Pollock's effort to explain the sudden renaissance of Sanskrit knowledge in the sixteenth century, he openly acknowledged and tried to confront the very real difficulty in capturing what exactly constitutes newness in the intellectual output of this period. On the one hand, scholars across the full range of disciplines began to explicitly label their own positions, or those of their opponents, as *navya* or "new." On the other hand, these labels were applied to positions that were often formulated in terms of very old problematics rather than emerging as a direct response to new cultural and historical conditions. This difficulty is compounded, as Pollock has noted, by the lack of systematic historical analyses of the earlier phases of many of these disciplines, making it impossible to see what is different about the *navya* scholarship. Even worse, the actual data concerning *sāstric* production, patronage, intellectual lineages, and the entire sociology of knowledge for this period are almost entirely unmapped. In response to these problems, Pollock has formulated several criteria for gauging innovation and the vitality of the various systems of knowledge. These include the emergence of a variety of new genres of scholarly writing, the widespread adoption of the new formal analysis emerging from the school of "New Logic" or *navyanyāya*, an increasingly interdisciplinary approach, and a new historical self-consciousness that had been largely absent from earlier periods. Pollock also saw the need to determine the time and manner in which this scholarly production, just like the literary a few centuries earlier, effectively ended, or died, as a meaningful force in South Asian culture. Here, too, Pollock

suggests a set of criteria for determining when a form of knowledge has died: the radical diminution of quantity of new works produced and of the speed and distance with which they were distributed, the vitality of traditional educational institutions, and the increasing turn toward purely derivative and repetitive textual production.

Parimal G. Patil's contribution to this volume consists of a careful analysis of and meditation on these two sets of criteria of vitality and death, with specific reference to the text traditions of Nyāya-vaiśeṣika and Vedānta. Patil finds Pollock's criteria for newness to be compelling and broadly applicable to the materials he is investigating, although, like Pollock, he notes that the drive for newness in Nyāya-vaiśeṣika begins much earlier than in other disciplines. Indeed, he shows that the innovations in Nyāya-vaiśeṣika in this period were more than merely formal, particularly drawing attention to the unprecedented and intense debate within this tradition over the content of the experience of spiritual liberation or *mokṣa*. What Patil demonstrates is that this innovation in Nyāya-vaiśeṣika carried over to a different *śāstra* altogether, the theological investigation of Vedānta, and that this newly vivified Vedāntic theory of spiritual liberation was to remain an active, even radically original, field all the way into the early twentieth century. Thus, although Patil begins by critiquing Pollock's fusion of quantitative/objective and qualitative/subjective criteria to judge the vitality of a tradition, he ends with an preliminary survey of late Vedānta and Nyāya-vaiśeṣika educational institutions and publications to show that even on the latter account a case can be made for the longevity of these traditions well beyond the postulated moment of death.

The ongoing vitality of the Nyāya-vaiśeṣika tradition is demonstrated likewise in Ethan Kroll's essay, which charts, within the domain of property law, the application of the most cutting-edge and formally recondite Nyāya theory on the nature of proprietary right or "ownedness" (*svatva*). Kroll shows very clearly that the philosophical debate over the ontological status of the quality of ownership came to play a direct role in this period in legal debates over the nature of inheritance and the proper division of paternal property. Early modern legal theorists were faced with two apparently conflicting theories of inheritance rights, one propounded by Vijñāneśvara's *Mitākṣarā* and the other by Jīmūtavāhana's *Dayābhāga*, both of which date to the twelfth century. Basically the question is whether the son's proprietary rights are produced only at the moment of the father's death, as Jīmūtavāhana argues, or at the moment of the son's birth, as is the opinion of Vijñāneśvara. Kroll charts the ways in which seventeenth-century theorists made use of New Logic and its theory of qualities to show that these two views are not necessarily

incompatible. He goes on to argue that these seventeenth-century discussions are not simply an exercise in abstract philosophy but are meant to provide concrete guidance for improving actual legal practice.

Just as Kroll charts the theoretical reflection on a practical legal problem, Ananya Vajpeyi's contribution investigates the ways in which, in the very same period, the existence of real and perduring social inequality gave rise to Brahmanical ideological justification. The seventeenth century was a period when the question of the social, political, and ritual status of the Shudra (the hierarchically lowest of the four *varṇa*s in classical social theory) was forcefully raised by, among other things, the rise to power of the Mahratta warlord Śivāji. As is well known, the famous legal expert Gāgābhaṭṭa, himself the author of a text on the legal and sociomoral status of the Shudra (*śūdra-dharma*), was invited from Benares to lend authority to the coronation of Śivāji, allegedly of Shudra origin, and actually conduct the ceremony. It is in this context that the status and identity of the Shudra come to new prominence, as reflected in a series of important texts devoted to analyzing the problem of *śūdra-dharma*. Vajpeyi explores the ways in which medieval and early modern commentators have sought to deny the Shudraness of apparently Shudra characters who are granted access to Vedic learning in several scriptural passages from the Upanishads, thereby suppressing a potential source of resistance to the existing ideology of social dominance. It is these very same Upanishadic passages, as Vajpeyi shows, that B. R. Ambedkar turned to in the twentieth century to attack from within the ideology of caste. Thus here, too, we can see that modern discourse is rooted in that of precolonial early modernity.

The final essay in this volume presents an altogether different literary culture, the Indo-Persian, whose encounters with Sanskrit have become a major focus of interest in Pollock's recent work (e.g., Pollock 2001a, 2004a, 2006). One particular site of such cross-cultural interaction was the Mughal court in the seventeenth century, which Sanskrit poets and scholars such as Jagannātha and Siddhicandra inhabited together with writers and scholars of Persian. As Pollock has shown, these scholars not only knew Persian but also incorporated, at least to some extent, Persianate sensibilities into to their Sanskrit writings. In his contribution to this volume, Rajeev Kinra explores the Persian side of this cultural and linguistic space. More specifically, Kinra studies the Indo-Persian lexicographical tradition and its relation to Persian poetry. Persian represents another, and in many ways different, vision of cosmopolitan life: by the Mughal period, North India was the epicenter of a globalized Persian that, while looking westward to the classical models of the Iranian Plateau, had come to possess its own literary and cultural sensibility. At the same time,

Persian was a language of government and state power in a way that Sanskrit never was in its millennium-long career as southern Asia's preeminent language of power. It is at the intersection of these two trajectories—Persian as learned cultural import and the language of everyday political life—that Kinra locates and explores the history of Persian lexicography. He shows that alongside the growth and renaissance of Sanskrit knowledge systems, the spectacular efflorescence of an Indo-Persian philology is one of the great cultural achievements of South Asian early modernity. That the history of this philological practice is almost entirely unstudied is the result of two equally invidious forms of cultural reaction: the crisis of South Asian forms of knowledge brought about by the onset of colonialism; and the growth of an aggressively nativist and nationalist view of Persian culture, which consigned Indo-Persian to the status of a decadent and envenerated Eastern eccentricity. It is entirely in the spirit of Pollock's work, with his tireless efforts to overcome the imposed epistemological crisis of colonialism and his powerfully argued rejection of nationalist ways of thinking, that the world of Persianate India is now beginning to be sympathetically and critically rethought in work such as Kinra's.

New Directions

Taken together, these essays make clear both the extent of Pollock's contributions and how much more remains to be done. As this volume demonstrates, Pollock's work has not only yielded a great deal of new knowledge in a variety of fields, but it has also produced a series of far-reaching and bold hypotheses about large-scale cultural changes and their relationship to social power. What these essays themselves demonstrate is the continued need to approach the South Asian past with big questions such as these, but also to always be prepared to be surprised—even confounded—by what that past can reveal, and so to rethink our guiding theories and presumptions. Many of the questions that Pollock has raised will continue to guide the field for years to come. How and why do people choose a language in a multilingual and multiliterary space? How do literary cultures come into being and how do they cease to exist? How can we recognize such moments of birth and death and how can we account for them? What is the status of emic claims in the etic knowledge that we produce? How do we chart epochal shifts in human history, including that of modernity itself? It is questions like these that Pollock's work has raised so insistently, and the essays in this volume aim to take up the conversation his work has initiated and take it in new directions.

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PART ONE

The *Rāmāyaṇa* and Its Readers

1

A New Perspective on the Royal Rāma Cult at Vijayanagara[1]

Ajay K. Rao

Written by Sheldon Pollock (1993) in the wake of the Ayodhyā violence in the early 1990s, "Rāmāyaṇa and Political Imagination in India" remains one of his most influential and controversial articles. Covering an extremely wide range of sources, Pollock charts historical antecedents for the use of the epic in contemporary nationalist discourse and documents the late date of cultic worship of Rāma, in effect developing a set of materials for theorizing the early-second-millennium encounter between Indo-Islamic and Sanskritic cultures in South Asia. The article is widely read and has engendered a number of critical appraisals.[2]

"Rāmāyaṇa and Political Imagination" shaped my own research project and served as a powerful and challenging resource, an article I have read and reread for years. In this essay, I revisit the empirical terrain of "Rāmāyaṇa and Political Imagination" through a discussion of Pollock's etiology of Rāma worship. After a brief summary of the article, I present new evidence for a possible alternative causal hypothesis based on the role of the Śrīvaiṣṇava religious order in developing a royal Rāma cult at Vijayanagara.

Pollock's argument is as follows. The early second millennium (twelfth to fourteenth centuries) witnessed a sudden revaluation of the Rāmāyaṇa narrative in the public discourse of kingdoms throughout the subcontinent. Whereas the Rāmāyaṇa was previously an important source for the conceptualization of divine kingship, now for the first time historical kings identified themselves with Rāma; kings actually *became* Rāma, as is demonstrable from temple remains, inscriptions, and historical narratives. Texts and ritual practices transformed the Rāmāyaṇa into a vehicle for rhetorical othering through the strategic deployment of imaginative resources in the narrative: just as the king was now identified with Rāma, so, too, demonized Others were identified with the epic antagonist, Rāvaṇa. According to Pollock, this appropriation of the Rāmāyaṇa narrative in political symbology was directed toward Muslims and the historically imminent threat of Indo-Islamic rule.

Pollock directly correlates the new centrality for the Rāmāyaṇa with the dates of Muslim invasions and the rapid expansion of the Delhi Sultanate. This is tantamount to a *causal* argument. By causal I mean an argument that posits an asymmetric relation between prior and subsequent events and ascribes motives to historical agents.[3] Pollock describes how the use of the epic in public discourse and the resulting royal patronage of Rāma temples occurred "in reaction to the transformative encounter with the polities of Central Asia . . . and the resultant new social and political order instituted by the establishment of the Sultanate" (1993: 277). The evidence for this conclusion is the concomitance—both spatial and temporal—between events: the raids of Mahmud of Ghazni in early-eleventh-century Punjab and eastern Rajasthan with the rise of Ayodhyā as a Vaiṣṇava pilgrimage center; 'Alā al-Dīn's subjugation of kings in what is now Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra with the construction of temples at Rāmtek by the Yādavas; and the appointment of governors of the Delhi Sultanate in the Deccan with the establishment of Vijayanagara with a Rāma temple at its core.

"Rāmāyaṇa and Political Imagination" addresses questions of significance for our understanding of communalism in India. Did colonialism construct communalism? Or do communal relations have a history antedating colonialism? Were there in fact protocommunal forms of identification prior to the advent of the British as seen in these narratives of othering? Some have interpreted Pollock's article as suggesting the latter, insofar as this literature marks the expression of a Hindu identity developed in the face of the challenge posed by the presence of Muslim Others, whose ideology may have represented what Pollock calls an "unprecedented unassimilability" (1993: 264).[4] An alternative analysis may call into question the rigidity of this set of oppositions (presupposing an implicit civilization concept), as well as the isolation of particular institutions (e.g., Islam) over and against others in South Asia during the early second millennium.

Among the temple sites examined by Pollock, the Vijayanagara empire (1336–1565 CE) and its capital in the Deccan warrant special attention for several reasons. Vijayanagara was *the* central locus for Rāma worship on an imperial scale. Based on a variety of data, which I detail in what follows, it appears that members of the Śrīvaiṣṇava order were primary players in institutionalizing Rāma worship at Vijayanagara. If I am correct, this may suggest an alternative causal explanation to the concomitance argument. The question I would like to pose is: to what degree is what occurred at Vijayanagara in part the culmination of developments within this religious order, beginning with the treatment of the Rāma story in temples and esoteric literature as

early as the ninth century? While there is no explicit connection between the Vijayanagara temples and the epigraphic and poetic discourses of othering examined by Pollock, we do have access to a large number of Sanskrit and Maṇipravāḷa (mixed Tamil and Sanskrit) commentaries on the Rāmāyaṇa, from which we may infer the motives of Śrīvaiṣṇavas who appropriated the Rāma cult. This literature presents a theological engagement with the epic narrative totally unrelated to the political demonizing of Muslims.

In the section of "Rāmāyaṇa and Political Imagination" dealing with temples, Pollock first reviews the absence of evidence of Rāma worship before the twelfth century (excepting some notable tenth-century Coḷa bronzes).[5] Whereas scenes from the Rāmāyaṇa appear in temple wall friezes from at least the fifth century CE, the figure of Rāma was not the object of veneration, the actual installed icon, until the sudden emergence of a number of temples coinciding with the expansion of Muslim political power in South Asia. Pollock examines three sites in detail: Ayodhyā, Rāmtek, and Vijayanagara. But of these it is only at Vijayanagara that we find a Rāma temple as a state sanctuary and the performance of major royal rituals associated with Rāma; none of this is found in Ayodhyā or Rāmtek.

Although Ayodhyā became a Vaiṣṇava center from the eleventh century with the Gāhaḍavālas, it is not clear that a Rāma temple existed there during the period in question (twelfth through the fourteenth centuries). The development of the putative birthplace of Rāma into a place of pilgrimage need not entail a Rāma cult; there is no textual or epigraphic link between these temples and the figure of Rāma. And the complex of four dry masonry temples at Rāmtek is located more than five hundred kilometers from the Yādava capital, with no indication of its centrality to Yādava kingship.[6] Hemādri, the court's highest religious authority, or *rājaguru*, of the Yādava rulers Mahādeva (1261–71) and Rāmacandra (1271–1312), who oversaw the construction of these temples at Rāmtek, was the first to describe Rāma liturgies in his compendium, the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*, but these appear to be minor domestic rituals, not royal ceremonies.[7]

Only during the Vijayanagara empire, founded in 1336, did the cult of Rāma become significant at the level of an imperial order. Built on a site associated in inscriptions from the eleventh century with the events of the Rāmāyaṇa, the city was oriented toward the private royal shrine, the Rāmacandra temple.[8] On a special platform at the center of the city during the nine-day Mahānavamī festival (today called Daśera), Vijayanagara rulers self-consciously identified themselves with Rāma in his triumphant return to Ayodhyā as described at the end of the epic.

Archaeologists and historians working on Vijayanagara have never previously considered the role of Śrīvaiṣṇavas in developing the Rāma cult. While the large temple at the heart of the royal center of the capital, the Rāmacandra temple, has received a great deal of attention, almost all of this scholarship focuses on the structure of the temple and its significance for Vijayanagara kingship, without any consideration of the character of Rāma worship therein.[9] In what follows, I will show that the connection between Śrīvaiṣṇavas and Rāma worship was not an insignificant one but rather the result of a strategic partnership between Vijayanagara kings and members of the Śrīvaiṣṇava order.

Existing studies of Vijayanagara present a static, synchronic picture of Rāma worship that does not take into account the shift in royal dynasties from the Saṅgamas, with their Śaiva Kālāmukha affiliation, to the Śrīvaiṣṇava Sāḷuvas and Tuḷuvas.[10] This essay is therefore dedicated to two phases of Rāma worship: Rāma worship in Vijayanagara as a Śaiva kingdom and Rāma worship in Vijayanagara as a Vaiṣṇava kingdom.

In fact, it would be helpful to distinguish between three relevant blocks of time: (1) 1336 to the reign of Devarāya I (1406–22), a period of eighty to ninety years when no Rāma temple at Vijayanagara existed; (2) the reign of Devarāya I to the reign of Sāḷuva Narasiṃha (1486–91), a period of seventy to eighty years likely witnessing distinctively Śaiva performances of the Mahānavamī festival; and (3) the Sāḷuva, Tuḷuva, and Aravīḍu periods during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when Vijayanagara rulers explicitly associated themselves with the Śrīvaiṣṇava order. I focus on the latter two periods, and especially on the last, since this is when the construction of the majority of Rāma temples occurred.

I support my argument with concrete evidence, as well as a diachronic delineation of periods of Vijayanagara rule. The evidence includes: (1) the dating of accounts describing the Mahānavamī, (2) documentable stages of accretion and augmentation to the Rāmacandra temple and the Mahānavamī platform, and (3) the Śrīvaiṣṇava affiliation of Rāma temples located along the so-called axial systems.

I conclude with a discussion of how this analysis establishes the viability of an explanation of the establishment of Rāma worship independent of any possible reaction to Muslim rule.

1

Two Phases of Rāma Worship at Vijayanagara

Rāma Worship in a Śaiva Kingdom

Vijayanagara was a Śaiva (likely Kālāmukha) kingdom during the first dynasty of the Saṅgamas. The ensign of the Vijayanagara rulers remained the local form of Śiva, Virūpākṣa, until it was replaced by the Aravīḍu king Veṅkaṭa II (1586–1614) with Veṅkaṭeśvara, long after the kings Sāḷuva Narasiṃha, Kṛṣṇadevarāya, and Acyutarāya had replaced Śaivism with Vaiṣṇavism—more specifically Śrīvaiṣṇavism—as the state religion.

The construction of the Rāmacandra temple at the heart of the city, probably during the reign of Devarāya I (1406–1422), marks the first significant step toward the conceptualization of Vijayanagara kingship around the figure of Rāma. It appears clear that Devarāya I and the other Saṅgamas retained the Śaiva form of Virūpākṣa as the dynastic deity for the empire, despite the new association with Rāma. The famous inscription of Devarāya I commemorating the Rāmacandra temple mentions Virūpākṣa's consort, the goddess Pampā: "Just as Vāṇī supported King Bhoja, Tripurāmbā King Vatsa, and Kālī King Vikramāditya, so Pampā now supports King Devarāya" (*śrī vāṇīva bhojarājaṃ tripurāmbā vatsarājam iva kālīva vikramārkaṃ kalayati pampādya devarāyanṛpam*).[11]

This central place for Rāma in a Śaiva kingdom may be congruent with a peculiarly Śaiva division of labor: while the Śaiva king orients himself soteriologically toward Śiva as the ideal devotee, he represents in his own person Rāma the ideal king on earth. The division is exemplified by the respective locations of the Rāmacandra and Virūpākṣa temples. The restricted space of the inner sanctum of the Rāmacandra temple indicates that only the king and his priests would have been present at ceremonies conducted therein.[12] The relationship between Śaivism and the nascent Rāma cult (corroborated by the presence of the early Rāmāyaṇa friezes in predominantly Śaiva temples) means that Śrīvaiṣṇavas likely appropriated and adapted existing forms of Rāma worship, perhaps in part to stake a claim on the religious affiliation of the empire by transforming a practice that had become critical to the self-understanding of Vijayanagara kingship. The early Rāma cult could be seen in this sense as the merging of an earlier conception of divine kingship with a new definition of royal sovereignty through endowments to temples and, in the case of Vijayanagara, increasingly at the expense of grants to Brahmin communities (*brahmadeyas*) (Appadurai 1981: 63–64).

The most important festival at Vijayanagara, the Mahānavamī, at some point came to be associated with the figure of Rāma. But what is unclear

is *when* exactly this occurred. This festival took place in the month of Śrāvaṇa during the crucial transition from "passive" to "active" periods in the ritual cycle.[13] Our knowledge of the martial and celebratory character of this festival derives almost wholly from the accounts of four foreign visitors: Nicolo Conti, 'Abdur Razzāk, Domingo Paes, and Fernão Nuniz.[14] The first two, those of the Italian Conti and Persian 'Abdur Razzāk, are incomplete; in fact, 'Abdur Razzāk describes a festival spread over only three days, occurring at a different time during the year. The Portuguese visitors who provided more complete accounts visited Vijayanagara only in the sixteenth century, at the height of Śrīvaiṣṇava influence in Vijayanagara. It therefore remains entirely possible that the performance of the Mahānavamī was transformed from the time of the Śaiva Saṅgama dynasty to that of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Sāḷuva, Tuḷuva, and Aravīḍu dynasties. We can note the divergences even in pre-Vijayanagara liturgical descriptions of the Mahānavamī from Śaiva sources to Vaiṣṇava sources, particularly in the addition of a tenth day, Vijayadaśamī, commemorating Rāma's victory in a celebratory public display of power. While in the *Devībhāgavatapurāṇa*, the Mahānavamī ends after nine days, Hemādri's *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* adds the tenth day that became so significant in Vijayanagara.[15]

Given the paucity of evidence corroborating the performance of this festival before the sixteenth century, the Rāmāyaṇa association of the Vijayadaśamī, which directly followed the Mahānavamī—the central public festival of the goddess—could itself have been a late development.[16] We know that the Mahānavamī Dibbā, the platform just described, was constructed in four stages, the last in the sixteenth century (again, the period of Śrīvaiṣṇava influence at Vijayanagara).

Rāma Worship in a Vaiṣṇava Kingdom

With the end of the Saṅgama dynasty, a discernible ideological shift favored Śrīvaiṣṇavas and the pilgrimage center of Tirupati, first with Sāḷuva Narasiṃha (1486–93) and later with the Tuḷuva kings Kṛṣṇadevarāya (1509–30) and Acyutarāya (1530–42). In all periods of Vijayanagara history, kings patronized a wide variety of Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Jaina, and Islamic institutions; in this sense, the shift was not an absolute one. The close relationship between Vijayanagara royal agents and Śrīvaiṣṇavas is already evident in the Saṅgama period in the response to the sacking of Śrīraṅgam in the fourteenth century by armies of the Delhi Sultanate headed by Malik Kāfur, when the Vijayanagara general Gopanārya triumphantly reconsecrated the movable icon protected in Tirupati. As the work of Rangachari (1914–15, 1917), Viraraghavacharya

(1977), and Appadurai (1981) has shown, Vijayanagara royal agents played a key role in institutionalizing the divide between the southern (Teṅgaḷai) and northern (Vaṭagaḷai) Śrīvaiṣṇava schools. While the emergence of Teṅgaḷai institutionalism can be traced to the formation of the Śrīraṅganārāyaṇa Jīyar Ātinam in the fourteenth century at Śrīraṅgam through the partnership between Vijayanagara generals Gopanārya and Sāḷuva Kuṇṭa and Periya Kṛṣṇarāya Uttamanāmbi, Vaṭagaḷai institutionalism began after 1500 with Kaṇḍāḍai Rāmānuja Aiyaṅgār.

But during the Sāḷuva and Tuḷuva dynasties, the same period in which monumental post-Rāmacandra Rāma temples were built, Śrīvaiṣṇavas (and Mādhvas) attained unprecedented influence at Vijayanagara. Almost all new temples were Śrīvaiṣṇava, often bearing the Teṅgaḷai or Vaṭagaḷai insignia, and several were dedicated to Srīvaiṣṇava deities: Raṅganātha, Veṅkaṭeśvara, and Varadarāja, along with images of the Āḷvārs, the saintly figures of the tradition. It was also at this time that the temple of Tirupati began to become an important locus of cultural power, beginning with the change in dynasty with Sāḷuva Narasiṃha.[17] The status of Tirupati continued to rise with the Tuḷuva emperors Kṛṣṇadevarāya and Acyutarāya. Anila Verghese points out that "out of the 1250-odd epigraphs published by the [Tirupati] Devasthānam there are fewer than 150 records of the pre-Vijayanagara period, while 59 records are of the Saṅgama period, 168 of the Sāḷuva period, 229 of the reign of Kṛṣṇadevarāya, 251 of Acyutadevarāya's period, 176 of Sadāśiva's reign and 192 of Veṅkaṭa II's period" (1995: 70–71). Kṛṣṇadevarāya made Veṅkaṭeśvara his patron deity, visited Tirupati seven times, and composed the *Āmuktamālyada* in Telugu narrating the life of the Tamil saint Āṇḍāḷ, an important figure in the Śrīvaiṣṇava canon. Acyutarāya's regard for Tirupati was so great that he had himself crowned emperor first in the presence of Veṅkaṭeśvara at his temple before doing so again at Kālahasti and Vijayanagara. With the Aravīḍus, Śrīvaiṣṇava influence reached its apogee, with the aforementioned replacement of the ensign of Virūpākṣa with that of Venkaṭeśvara.

The construction of Rāma temples at this time and the simultaneous shift in the religious affiliation of Vijayanagara kings were not merely accidental, concurrent events. My claim that the sudden growth of the royal Rāma cult is related to Śrīvaiṣṇava influence rather than the narratives of othering is based primarily on an understanding of the relationship between these two sets of circumstances.

Key to our understanding of this relationship is the identity of those who held the all-important position of Vijayanagara's *rājaguru* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. During this crucial period several *rājagurus* belonged

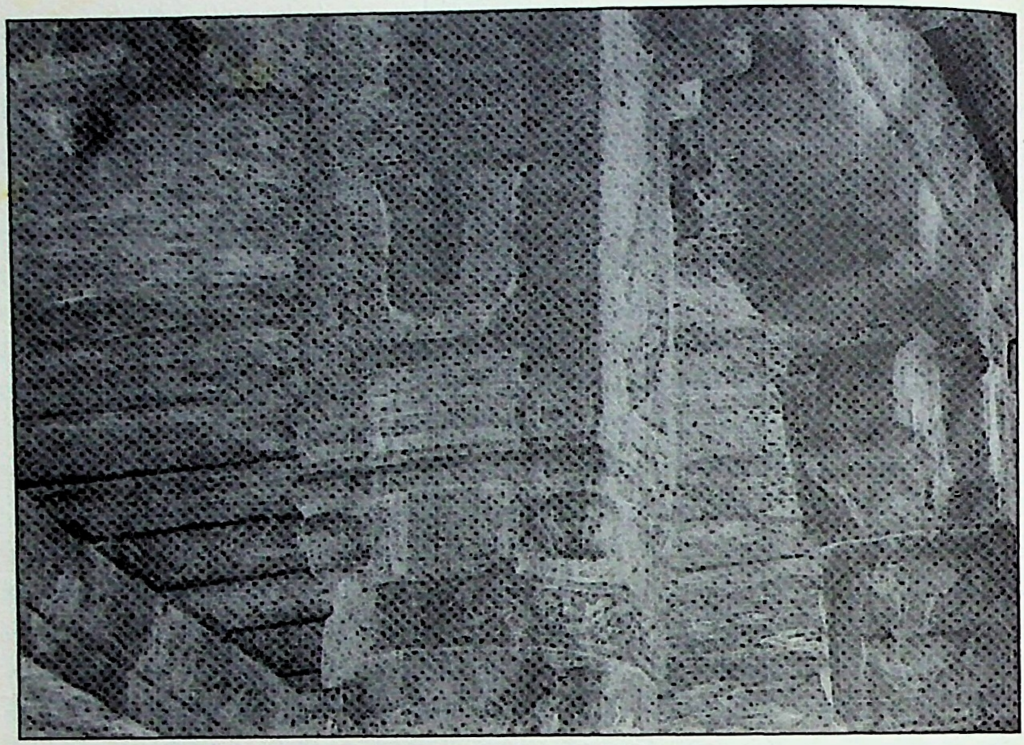


Figure 1: Śrīvaiṣṇava insignia at the Kodaṇḍarāma temple. Photo by the author.

to the Śrīvaiśṇava Tātācārya family, which descended from Śrīśailapūrṇa, Rāmānuja's maternal uncle who, according to hagiographic accounts, instructed him in the special meanings of the Rāmāyaṇa. These Tātācāryas remained expert redactors and exponents of the Rāmāyaṇa. The *Prapannāmṛta*, authored by Anantācārya (also a Tātācārya), recounts the story of two members of this family from Ettur converting the last Saṅgama king to Vaiṣṇavism through their recitation of the Rāmāyaṇa (Aiyangar 1919: 77–79). If scholars have at all paid attention to this remarkable account, they have done so in order to refute its historical veracity, due to the absence of any corroborating epigraphic evidence (e.g., Saletore 1940: 193–95). But the status of *Prapannāmṛta* as a historical document may be more indirect, and in fact, deeper; this account, whatever its accuracy may be, provides valuable insight into Śrīvaiṣṇava conceptions of the role of the Rāmāyaṇa narrative as a powerful means of promulgating theology and securing the support of Vijayanagara rulers. Influential Tātācāryas at Vijayanagara included Kṛṣṇadevarāya's *rājaguru* Veṅkaṭa Tātācārya and Rāmarāya's (1542–65) *rājaguru* Pañcamatabhañjanam Tātācārya.

Along with the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, members of the Mādhva order were critically involved in the intensified Vaiṣṇava influence at Vijayanagara, and they were likely instrumental in spreading the popularity of Hanumān. The height of Mādhva influence at Vijayanagara is observable in the close relationship between the Mādhva leader Vyāsatīrtha and two of Vijayanagara's most influential kings, Kṛṣṇadevarāya and Acyutarāya (though given the lack of supporting epigraphic evidence it appears that the claim of the *Vyāsayogicaritam* that Vyāsatirtha was the actual *rājaguru* of Kṛṣṇadevarāya is hyperbolic) (Verghese 1995: 8–9). Hanumān figures prominently in Mādhva theology, a fact that may be connected to the ubiquity of iconic representations of Hanumān in Vijayanagara; these are carved onto boulders around the city and are neither found in temples nor accompanied by inscriptions (Lutgendorf 2007: 66–73).

Among the Rāma temples of fifteenth and sixteenth century Vijayanagara, four in particular merit consideration: (1) the aforementioned Rāmacandra temple (early fifteenth century); (2) the Kodaṇḍarāma temple (early sixteenth century); (3) the Mālyavanta Raghunātha temple (sixteenth century); and (4)

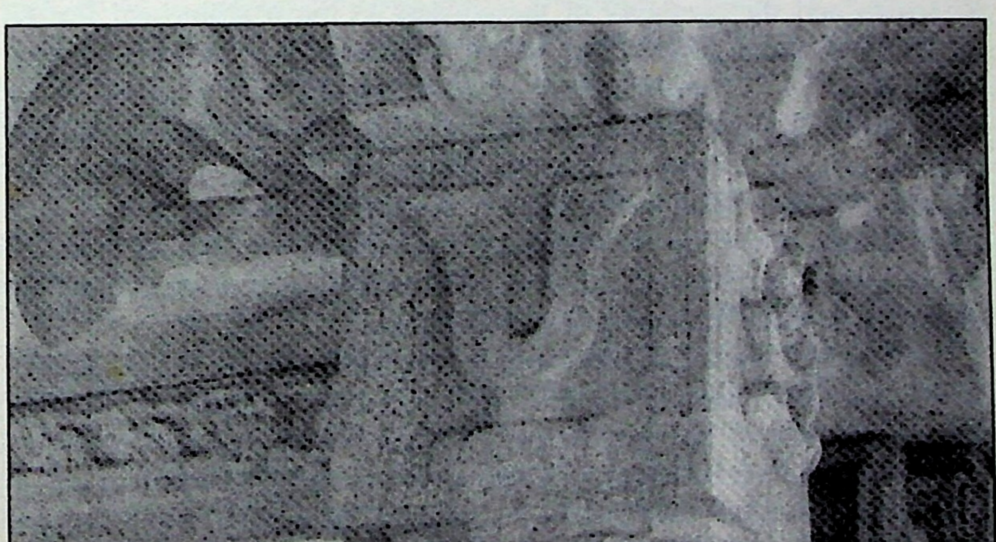


Figure 2: Śrīvaiṣṇava insignia at the Rāmacandra temple. Photo by the author.

the Paṭṭābhirāma temple (sixteenth century, during the reign of Acutarāya).

While the fifteenth-century Rāmacandra temple almost certainly did not bear the Śrīvaiṣṇava insignia at its inception, I have observed it on pillars of the walls of the sixteenth-century addition to the temple built by Kṛṣṇadevaraya (see fig. 2).

Note the similarity between the insignia in a universally recognized Śrīvaiṣṇava temple (Kodaṇḍarāma) in figure 1 and the Rāmacandra temple itself in figure 2. The Rāmacandra temple was the first temple ornately built in the distinctive Tamil style. If the Rāmacandra temple was not explicitly Śrīvaiṣṇava at its inception, it became so within a mere quarter of a century. Later in the sixteenth century, Āravīḍī Veṅgaḷarāju (likely another name for the younger brother of Rāmarāya, Veṅkaṭādri), strengthened this affiliation by installing icons of the Āḻvārs, as recorded on an undated inscription on the west wall of the north gateway.[18]

What are we to make of this set of facts? Such explicit markers indicate that at some point in time Śrīvaiṣṇavas likely took control of the Rāmacandra temple, which earlier may not have been closely affiliated with a particular order or may even have had a Śaiva orientation given the centrality of Virūpākṣa and the centrality of the goddess to the Mahānavamī festival during the Saṅgama period. This fact in and of itself may have far-reaching implications for our understanding of Rāma worship at Vijayanagara. All of the archaeological research on Rāma worship at Vijayanagara, including Pollock's sources, rests on the Rāmacandra temple alone (ignoring the other temples examined below). That this monumental temple eventually became a Śrīvaiṣṇava temple (corroborated by the Śrīvaiṣṇava insignia in fig. 2) dramatically demonstrates the close association between Śrīvaiṣṇavas and the Rāma cult in what I have called the second phase.

In contrast to the Rāmacandra temple, other Rāma temples at Vijayanagara have never been carefully studied. All bear either Teṅgaḷai or Vaṭagaḷai Śrīvaiṣṇava insignia, and many of them are built on sites bearing associations with events from the Rāmāyaṇa. The sixteenth-century Kodaṇḍarāma temple is a Vaṭagaḷai temple with standing images of Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa carved from a boulder. The temple, which continues to be used today, is said to be the site for the coronation of the monkey king Sugrīva, who secured his throne with the aid of Rāma. The Mālyavanta Raghunātha temple, believed to be situated on the mountain where Rāma stayed before the campaign for Laṅkā, also contains a core built around a large boulder dating to the Saṅgama period, but the temple structure itself is from the sixteenth century. In this large complex, images of the Āḻvārs, Rāmānuja, and the Teṅgaḷai insignia

appear in several places on the pillars. The Paṭṭābhirāma temple, actually the largest extant Rāma temple in the city, was dedicated by Acyutarāya according to an inscription dated 1539.[19]

In total there are eight extant Rāma temples at Vijayanagara. They appear to have been endowed by a variety of groups, including royal agents, subordinate rulers, private citizens, and merchant guilds, indicating that the cult of Rāma had a life of its own in addition to its significance for the ideology of kingship.

One feature of these newly built temples—their location—may provide an especially telling sign of their importance to Vijayanagara kings. Fritz, Michell, and Rao have suggested that the capital was organized into axial systems and circumambulatory routes, establishing "the importance of the Rāmacandra Temple as the nucleus of the royal center," in effect, transforming the geography of the city itself into an emblem of the identification between king and god (1984: 149). The association between some of the surrounding points—the Tuṅgabhadra river, and the Mālyavanta hill—and Rāma would have been strengthened in the sixteenth century through the construction of these Śrīvaiṣṇava Rāma temples, heightening the mythic associations of these sites dating to pre-Vijayanagara times. Śrīvaiṣṇavas, therefore, would have been participants in the construction of the landscape of the Vijayanagara capital into a virtual theophany of Rāma. The mapping of the identification of Rāma and the Vijayanagara king with the layout of the city was not, therefore, a mere synchronic fact of the Vijayanagara world.

We must be wary of any effort to treat Rāma worship wholly from the perspective of kingship without consideration of the agency of the actual participants in these practices, the composers and redactors of texts, the liturgists, those responsible for establishing and worshipping Rāma icons. This neglect seems to presuppose some version of legitimation theory—naturalizing relationships of domination and subordination through the use of mystifying symbols and practices, as is apparent in the reliance of Fritz, Michell, and Rao on Kulke's (1980) sequential model for royal empowerment. In his recent book, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, Pollock extends an extremely nuanced critique of legitimation theory.[20] Legitimation theory does not explain why these signifying practices perdure, nor does it provide a plausible account for the way real historical agents think and act. We need to focus on the complex partnership between royal and religious agents, the role of the religious orders as a constitutive component of imperium.

Conclusion

So what are the implications of all of this for Pollock's causal argument, namely, that the new centrality of Rāma and the Rāma story in the South Asian political imagination is the result of their use for demonizing Muslim Others? If Śrīvaiṣṇavas were, in fact, primary players in establishing the royal Rāma cult at Vijayanagara, perhaps the construction of these new temples was actually related to earlier developments within this religious order.

In South India, the institutional locus for the reception of the Rāmāyaṇa became the temple, a process that began in the ninth century with Kulacekarāḷvār's imaginative association of elements from the Rāma narrative with the iconography of Govindarāja at Cidambaram in the *Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi*.[21] Śrīvaiṣṇavas formulated core theological concepts through the use of stories from the Rāmāyaṇa as parables in Maṇipravāḷa, an oral linguistic register oriented toward the Śrīvaiṣṇava temple.

None of these Maṇipravāḷa texts nor the numerous full-length Sanskrit commentaries on the Rāmāyaṇa by Śrīvaiṣṇava scholars (including at least eight produced in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Vijayanagara) speak of Muslims; they do, however, engage in a sophisticated theological reading of the epic, involving an identification of Rāma with Śrīvaiṣṇava conceptions of the godhead, a generic characterization of the epic as a remembered work of tradition (*smṛti*), and the use of specific incidents as exemplars of the devotional concept of surrender (*prapatti*). Śrīvaiṣṇavas, more than any other religious order in the South, engaged in a complex hermeneutic project that sought to transform the Rāmāyaṇa into a soteriological work.

To illustrate the character of these approaches to the Rāmāyaṇa, we can turn to the general introduction to the most influential Śrīvaiṣṇava commentary on the Rāmāyaṇa, that of Govindarāja (produced in the Ahobila Maṭha at almost the exact same time in the sixteenth century when the Rāma temples were being constructed). Govindarāja describes the purpose of Viṣṇu's birth as Rāma as an effort to implement Vedic practice, now identified with devotional worship and facilitated by the divine presence in the world:

> The lord of Śrī, all his desires fulfilled, endowed with all auspicious qualities, the overlord, sat on his throne with his wives in the divine world of Vaikuṇṭha. Those who were eternally released (*nityamuktas*) always served his lotus feet, but he observed the ignorant beings who also deserved to serve his feet but did not attain him, stuck as they were to primeval matter at the time of dissolution like drops of gold stuck to beeswax. His mind filled with compassion, he gave them senses and bodies so that they could reach him.

> But as if diverted by the current of the river into the ocean with rafts meant for crossing the river, they became attached through their bodies to other objects. And even when he promulgated his own command in the form of the Veda so that they could discriminate between the real and the unreal, they did not respect it because of their incomprehension, false understanding, and misinterpretation. Like a king desiring to approach and discipline his subjects transgressing his command, the lord decided to descend in the fourfold form of Rāma, etc., to teach living beings through his own conduct. In the meantime Brahmā and all the gods requested him to take birth. And so, in order to fulfill the desire of his devotee, Daśaratha, as well, he descended in four parts.[22]

For intellectuals such as Govindarāja, Rāma was not merely the ideal king but the all-powerful, omniscient lord on earth as ensouler of the universe, qualified by the characteristics of transcendence (*paratva*) and accessibility (*saulabhya*).

If we factor in the trajectory of Śrīvaiṣṇava engagement with the Rāmāyaṇa, it appears that the Rāma cult involved the confluence of a number of complementary circumstances and agendas, including this heightened conception of the divinity of Rāma and the integration of the Rāmāyaṇa story into Śrīvaiṣṇava temples, the proximity to imperial power of Śrīvaiṣṇavas in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the shift toward temple donation as the primary form of royal-gift giving in the post-Coḷa era, the identification of historical kings with Rāma, and the pre-Vijayanagara mythic associations of the site.

Establishing a connection between Śrīvaiṣṇava devotionalism and the Rāma temples at Vijayanagara allows us to look at the political use of the epic in a new light. We can observe the marked difference between the thematics of these commentaries and the inscriptions and historical narratives demonizing Muslims by examining the treatment of what for Śrīvaiṣṇavas is the most politically and theologically charged event in the entire Rāmāyaṇa: the surrender of Rāvaṇa's brother, Vibhīṣaṇa, to Rāma. Rāma's response to the sudden appearance of Vibhīṣaṇa represents one of his more gracious acts in the epic. After telling the skeptical monkeys that one should never abandon someone who approaches in friendship, even if they may have faults, he asks Sugrīva to bring forward whoever is asking for protection, whether he be Vibhīṣaṇa or Rāvaṇa himself (*yadi vā rāvaṇaḥ svayam*) (Rām. 6.18.36). Here, in the Śrīvaiṣṇavas' favorite Rāmāyaṇa episode, the politics of the narrative are diametrically opposed to that found in the narratives of conquest and resistance: the demons—Vibhīṣaṇa (and even Rāvaṇa)—are, according to the

Śrīvaiṣṇava reading, the recipients of theological grace rather than the object of othering.

Let us review the evidence for the alternative etiology of the Rāma cult. Is there a link between the construction of Rāma temples at Vijayanagara and the demonizing of Muslims evident in the *Pṛthvīrājavijaya* corpus or the various inscriptions examined by Pollock? While Pollock has carefully analyzed the mythopoetics of othering in these sources, none of the epigraphic evidence related to the Rāma temples at Vijayanagara speaks of this dynamic nor even mentions Muslims. The two inscriptions examined by Pollock are both from the Northwest: the Dabhoi inscription of 1253 in Gujarat and the praise poem (*praśasti*) of the Cāhamāna king Pṛthvirāja II of 1168; there does not appear to be any explicit connection between these and Vijayanagara. We do have a set of events occurring in close succession—Muslim invasions and the construction of Rāma temples from the twelfth century—but Pollock himself has elsewhere cited the dictum "concomitance is not causality" (Pollock 2006: 72).

Positing an implicit reaction to the expansion of the Sultanate in the Deccan is also problematic in light of recent study of the "Islamicization" of Hindu culture at Vijayanagara, which casts doubt on nationalist characterizations of the Vijayanagara state's resistance to Islamic rule. Not only did Vijayanagara kings in fact adopt Islamicizing courtly dress, but from the earliest inscriptions announcing the founding of the empire they called themselves sultans (with the epithet "sultan among Indian kings," *hindurāyasuratrāṇa*). Examples of elite mobility between northern and southern Deccan also vitiate against such a perspective. These include the marriage of the Bahmani sultan Firoz Shah to the daughter of Devarāya I (who commissioned the construction of the Rāmacandra temple) at the Vijayanagara capital in 1407, the recruitment of ten thousand Turkish cavalrymen into Vijayanagara by Devarāya II, and the service under both a Sultanate and Vijayanagara by two generals whose biographies were closely intertwined: the future king Rāmarāya (at Golkonda and Vijayanagara) and 'Ain al-Mulk Gīlāni (at Bijapur and Vijayanagara).[23] As an explanatory approach, it is more economical to argue from extant evidence, and there does appear to be ample evidence linking the construction of Rāma temples at Vijayanagara to the broader theological use of the epic by Śrīvaiṣṇavas.

Abbreviations

CSSH	*Comparative Studies in Society and History*
EI	*Epigraphia Indica*
HR	*History of Religions*
IJHS	*International Journal of Hindu Studies*
JAS	*Journal of Asian Studies*
JBBRAS	*Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*
QJMS	*Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*
Rām	*Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki*
SA	*South Asia*
SII	*South Indian Inscriptions*
VPR	*Vijayanagara: Progress of Research*

Notes

[1] I am grateful to John Fritz, George Michell, Jack Hawley, and Rajam Raghunathan for comments on earlier drafts of this essay.

[2] Most notable are Chattopadhyaya 1998; Ludden 1994; and Lutgendorf 1994.

[3] On asymmetric causal relations, see Lewis 1979.

[4] Examples of such an interpretation include Talbot 1995; and Lorenzen 1999.

[5] These bronzes, which Barrett (1965) and Nagaswamy (1980) have examined, are almost identical in appearance, with bow-bearing Rāma (Kodaṇḍa Rāma) accompanied to the right and left by Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā.

[6] There are strong mythic associations for Rāmtek; it is believed to be both the place where Rāma killed the Śūdra ascetic Śambūka and the Rāmagiri where the semidivine *yakṣa* in the *Meghadūta* is exiled (Cousins 1897: 7ff.). Besides the Rāma temple, the site includes the surrounding Ghaṭeśvara, Śuddheśvara, Kedāra, and Āñjaneya (Hanumān) temples (Verma 1973). Rāmacandra dedicated these temples in a stone inscription datable to the last quarter of the thirteenth century. *EI* 25, 7–20.

[7] Although Hemādri quotes from a Pāñcarātra source, the *Agastyasaṃhita*, it seems (despite misconceptions among scholars, including Bakker [1986]) that this text is likely apocryphal. The *Agastyasaṃhita* describing Rāma rituals is not among the Pāñcarātra manuscripts H. Daniel Smith collected for his descriptive catalog nearly thirty years ago; instead, he includes an altogether different text bearing the same title (Bharati 1978). This rival version of the *Agastyasaṃhita* was probably compiled subsequent to Hemādri's citation. We can therefore say that, in effect, Hemādri invented the Rāma liturgies. *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* describes three separate festivals relevant for our discussion: the Rāmanavamī, the Rāghavadvādaśīvrata, and the Mahānavamī. Rāmanavamī, the earliest of the three in the calendar during the month of Caitra, marks the birth of Rāma. Occurring during the ritually inactive

period of the spring, it could not have been a large-scale royal ceremony; Hemādri's description indicates instead a domestic service. Similar is his description of the Rāghavadvādaśīvrata, a fast occurring on the twelfth day of the lunar fortnight of the month of Jyeṣṭha. The martial account of the Mahānavamī and Vijayadaśamī is an important precedent for the Vijayanagara royal festivals, but in the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* they are not explicitly connected to the Rāmāyaṇa.

[8] The geomythic associations of the Vijayanagara site are all from the *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, including Lake Pampā (also the name for the consort of Virūpākṣa, the city's Śaiva tutelary deity), the Mālyavanta hill, the Ṛṣyamūka hill, and the Añjanādri mountain, several of which later became the locations of important Rāma temples. While a few pre-Vijayanagara inscriptions refer to these associations from the eleventh century, there is no evidence of preexisting Rāma worship barring an isolated twelfth- or thirteenth-century Hoysala *kodaṇḍa* temple (located in Chikmaṅglūr District, site 91. Padigar 1983: 52).

[9] See, for instance, Dallapiccola et al. 1991; and Fritz, Michell, and Rao 1984.

[10] For a brief discussion of the Kālāmukhas, see the essay by Cox in this volume.

[11] *SII* 9, pt. 2, no. 573.

[12] According to Fritz, Michell, and Rao, "[T]he limited space within the principal shrine suggests a restricted use (for the king, his priests, and perhaps, also his ministers and high officials)" (1984: 149). In addition to the Rāmacandra temple, there are records of grants by Devarāya II (1423–46) to a few other Rāma temples, including the Rāma temple in the Advaita Raghūttama Maṭha at Gokarṇa.

[13] "At Vijayanagara periods of rest alternated with periods of movement. For part of each year, the king, court, and army resided at the capital; the other part of the year was set aside for pilgrimage and war" (ibid., 147). See also Inden 1978.

[14] Sewell provides full translations of the accounts of Paes and Nuniz (1962: 228–376).

[15] *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* (*vrata khaṇḍa*, vol. 1, 900–920, 970–73); *Devībhāgavatapurāṇa*, 3.26–27. Also consider the Jaina transformation of the Navarātra under the Caulukya king Kumārapāla of Gujarat (1143–74), who prohibited the sacrificial animal offering (*bali-dāna*) following his conversion from Śaivism to Jainism (Sanderson 2009: 245–46).

[16] The pre-Vijayanagara *Devībhāgavatapurāṇa* does recount the performance of the Mahānavamī by Rāma, but there is no reference in it to a cultic worship of Rāma himself.

[17] Sāḷuva Narasiṃha had been a patron of Tirupati even before becoming king with endowments through his chosen intermediary, the influential Kaṇḍāḍai Rāmānuja Aiyaṅgār. Through his affiliation with the Vijayanagara king, this Kaṇḍāḍai Rāmānuja Aiyaṅgār was able to take charge of a Rāmānuja Kūṭa established for the benefit of non-Brahmin Śrīvaiṣṇavas and became the guardian of the gold treasury at Tirupati (Appadurai 1981: 89–97).

[18] *VPR*, no. 67.

[19] *SII* 9, pt. 2, no. 595.

[20] Pollock 2006: 511–24. Pollock extends Anthony Giddens's global critique of functionalism to a critique of legitimation theory (Giddens 1981).

[21] *Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* 10.1–10.

[22] *śriyaḥ patir avāptasamastakāmaḥ samastakalyāṇaguṇātmakaḥ sarveśvaraḥ "vaikuṇṭhe tu pare loke śriyā sārdham jagatpatiḥ/ āste viṣṇur acintyātmā bhaktair bhāgavataiḥ saha//" ity uktarītyā śrīvaikuṇṭhākhye divyaloke śrīmahāmaṇimaṇḍape śrībhūminīlābhiḥ saha ratnasiṃhāsanam adhyāsīno nityair muktaiś ca nirantara-paricaryamāṇacaraṇanalino pi tadvad eva svacaraṇayugalaparicaraṇārhān api taddhīnān pralaye prakṛtivilīnān madhūcchiṣṭamagnahemakaṇasadṛkṣān kṣīṇajñānān jīvān avalokya "evam saṃsṛticakrasthe bhrāmyamāṇe svakarmabhiḥ/ jīve duḥkhākule viṣṇoḥ kṛpā kāpy upajāyate//" ity uktarītyā dayamānamanāḥ "vicitrā dehasampattir īśvarāya niveditum/ pūrvam eva kṛtā brahman hastapādādisaṃyutā//" ity uktaprakāreṇa mahadādisaṃsṛṣṭikrameṇa teṣām svacaraṇakamalasamāśrayaṇocit-āni karaṇakalevarāṇi dattvā nadītaraṇāya dattaiḥ plavair nadīrayānusāreṇa sāgaram avagāhamāneṣv iva teṣu tair viṣayāntarapravaṇeṣu teṣāṃ sadasadvivecanāya "śāsanāc chāstram" ity uktarītyā svaśāsanarūpaṃ vedākhyaṃ śāstraṃ pravartyāpi tasminn apratipattivipratipattyanyathāpratipattibhis tair anādṛte svaśāsanātilaṅghinaṃ janapadaṃ svayam eva sādhayitum abhiyiyāsur iva vasudhādhipatiḥ svācāramukhena tān śikṣayituṃ rāmādirūpeṇa caturdhāvatitīrṣur antarāmaragaṇaiḥ sadruhiṇair abhyarthitaḥ svārādhakasya daśarathasya manoratham api pūrayituṃ caturdhāvatatāra* (Rām., general intro).

[23] Wagoner (1996, 2000) has presented a persuasive argument for the Islamicization (distinguished from the religious category of Islamization) of Vijayanagara based on material, epigraphic, and narrative sources. On elite mobility in the Deccan, see Eaton 2005; and Wagoner 1999.

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2

A Text with a Thesis: The *Rāmāyaṇa* from Appayya Dīkṣita's Receptive End

Yigal Bronner

Sheldon Pollock's contributions to the study of the *Rāmāyaṇa* form a large corpus of scholarship. It is a tribute to Pollock's far-reaching and seminal scholarly corpus that the importance of his contributions to the study of the *Rāmāyaṇa* have been somewhat obscured by his more recent writing. These contributions include the lucid translation of books 2 and 3 of the epic (originally published in 1986 and 1991 by Princeton University Press under the editorship of Robert Goldman and now reprinted in the Clay Sanskrit Series), the vast and immensely thorough annotation accompanying these translations, and a dozen or so independent articles, some of which appeared originally or in revised form in the introductions to his two Princeton volumes. These articles include everything from microanalyses of lexical problems (Pollock 1983) to examinations of isolated narrative inconsistencies and their significance (Pollock 1986: 25–32), studies of the critical edition (Pollock 1981, 1984a), explorations of the meaning of textual passages as well as of the text as a whole (Pollock 1991), a probing of the way Vālmīki was read by late medieval commentators (Pollock 1984b), and a study of the unexpected birth of a Rāma cult in the twelfth century and a set of new uses of the story of Rāma during the centuries of dominant Muslim presence in India (Pollock 1993).[1]

Tying this impressive scholarly body together is Pollock's focus on the unity of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. For two centuries now, scholars have argued repeatedly and almost unanimously that this poem is "a fusion or amalgamation of two very different and in fact unrelated stories" and that it represents an early heroic epic whose nature was fundamentally transformed according to "a later theological program."[2] Thus, "the need to develop a unitary understanding of the poem was eliminated by eliminating the perception of the poem as a unitary work." Pollock, by contrast, set out first and foremost "to ponder how the work functions as a unit, [and] how its parts fit together to establish

a large and coherent pattern of signification."[3] His holistic understanding of the poem stems from examining it both from a "genetic" and a "receptive" historical perspective, that is, both by working back from Vālmīki and probing the processes through which this text was conceived and by examining how the text was received, interpreted, used, and modified by later generations of readers.

Pollock basically proposes a three-phase historical scheme for understanding the textual evolution of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. There is the early tradition of the Rāma story to which we no longer have any direct access, but which can be deduced, occasionally, from a few external references such as Aśvaghoṣa's and some "instructive remnants of a premonumental version" in the text itself.[4] This earlier tradition, he argues, for instance, knew of Daśaratha's pledge to give the kingdom to Kaikeyī's son as part of their marriage agreement (*rājyaśulka*) but not of the pair of open-ended boons he had given to her.[5] The middle point in the development of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is represented by the "major synthesis" of "its antecedent elements," one that "fixed the essential contours of the work." This resulted in what Pollock calls the "monumental poem," represented in the critical edition and conventionally associated with the name "Vālmīki."[6] Following this watershed moment, the poem continued to evolve, and much of what the Baroda critical edition edits out as interpolations reflect its post-Vālmīki transformation.

This scheme may seem simple, but there are several profound innovations that are inherent to it. One is in seeing the monumental poem as embodying the 'essential contours' of the *Rāmāyaṇa* as we know it, including the putatively late divinity of Rāma. Another is the observation that the ethical and aesthetic trajectories of Vālmīki's major synthesis remain active in the work of later editors, whose "interpolations" Pollock thus prefers to see as "amplifications." For instance, if the monumental poet introduced the two boons in part to "preserve the honesty and integrity of Daśaratha," and put the blame for Rāma's exile on his overambitious stepmother Kaikeyī and her deformed maid Mantharā, a similar motivation can be seen behind the attempts of later readers to "exculpate Kaikeyī by turning her agent Mantharā into an agent of the gods and making a divine virtue of her vicious ambition."[7]

Another breakthrough is in Pollock's use of the critical edition—a product of the most orthodox philological method—to expose the biases of his predecessors, supposedly committed to sound philology, and to corroborate, instead, the *emic* understanding of the poem. Particularly seminal in this respect is Pollock's "The Divine King of the *Rāmāyaṇa*," originally published in 1984 and then reprinted in the introduction to his second translation volume. Here

Pollock convincingly shows that "the divinity of the hero ... pervades the tale and is constitutive of it" and that "the boon of Rāvaṇa ... is inextricably meshed with the divine status of the hero." He further demonstrates that the seeming contradiction between Rāma the man and Rāma as Viṣṇu is necessitated by the logic of Rāvaṇa's boon, according to which the demon could not be killed by gods or by other supreme creatures, but which does not mention humans and lesser beings. Rāma's human incarnation is thus not an indication of the discrepancy between two separate stories or two phases in the development of the narrative but the very logic that ties the poem together. This, Pollock says, is "confirmed by the poem itself in various explicit references to the divine plan underpinning the whole action," by "the morphology of the boon motif throughout the history of Indian mythology," and by "the nature of the divine king in ancient India and its historical connections with early Vaiṣṇavism."[8] Students of Pollock are not used to seeing him argue passionately about the religious and mythological aspects of a work. Pollock himself once admitted to me that "The Divine King" basically wrote itself, despite him, in one burst, an observation that further confirms the sense of discovery and originality that pervades this formative essay.

Alongside this argument of Pollock's, my essay also engages the two other authors in this section. Ajay Rao's attempt to see the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s afterlife not just vis-à-vis the Muslim Other but also in the light of the ideological and political contestations among different Hindu sects provides some of the specific contextual contours for this essay.[9] As for Robert Goldman, his monumental contribution to our understanding of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the past four decades needs no introduction. More specifically, though, my essay indirectly engages a short but fascinating piece he coauthored with Jeffery Masson in the late 1960s (Goldman and Masson 1969). I say indirectly because I will deal with this essay primarily through the eyes of one sixteenth-century author who, despite the seeming linearity of time, seems to have anticipated Goldman and Masson and used them as his *pūrvapakṣa*s. A final word of acknowledgment: I owe much to my ongoing collaboration with my student Ilanit Loewy Shacham; the third section of this essay evolved from a jointly presented paper.[10]

Appayya Dīkṣita's Reading of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and Its Local Interlocutors

This essay deals with a work by Appayya Dīkṣita, which offers one of the most explicit and coherent emic arguments for the unity of Vālmīki's text, sheds new light on its hero and its major plotline, and lends interesting support to

many of Pollock's insights. Appayya (1520–92), the famous "author of one hundred books," was one of India's leading intellectuals in the sixteenth century. He was an important innovator in the traditions of *mīmāṃsā*, *vedānta*, and *alaṃkāraśāstra* whose scholarship attracted admirers and critics throughout the subcontinent. The celebrated grammarian Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita, for instance, is reported to have come all the way from Banaras to study with Appayya at his home village of Adayapalam, while the renowned Jagannātha, "King of Pundits" at the Mughal court of Shah Jahan, dedicated a whole book to criticizing his views on poetics.[11] Yet besides his "all-India" scholarly status, Appayya was deeply involved in the local scene of the South during the late Vijayanagara era. He was associated with several local rajas, built a temple in his native village, and wrote hymns for local deities; to this day, his image is carved and painted in a variety of South Indian temples and maṭhas.[12] Indeed, the hagiographers remember him as a local Śaiva hero who escaped several assassination attempts by leaders of rival sects and prevailed in a variety of direct confrontations.[13]

At first glance, Appayya's *Rāmāyaṇatātparyasārasaṅgrahastotra* (The Hymn Summarizing the Gist of the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s Import, hereafter RTSSS) seems solely representative of Appayya's local agenda.[14] The work participates in a conversation harking back at least to the early fourteenth century, a time when various southern writers began to vigorously appropriate Vyāsa's and Vālmīki's poems by pointing to their sectarian theological essence (*tātparya*, *sāra*). One such author, Madhva, argued for the centrality of Vāyu in the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* through the characters of Bhīma and Hanumān, respectively. Even more prominent interlocutors were the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, whose great leader Vedānta Deśika (1268–1369) claimed that Vibhīṣaṇa's joining of Rāma, at the beginning of Book 6 of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, epitomizes the all-important Śrīvaiṣṇava act of total surrender to God (*prapadana*, *prapatti*) and presents the core lesson of the poem.[15]

By Appayya Dīkṣita's time, as Ajay Rao has shown, the *Rāmāyaṇa* had become the subject of a vast and heated contestation, wherein it was used to prove the supremacy of this or that god and the tenets of one or another sect. We are told, for instance, that Anantācārya, a member of the important Śrīvaiṣṇava Tātācārya family of Śrīśailapūrṇa, won over Vijayanagara's King Virūpākṣa II (1465–86) to Śrīvaiṣṇavism using the *Rāmāyaṇa* as his conversion tool.[16] At stake, then, was not just the gist of Vālmīki's poem but also access to power and resources in the southern empire at its height. By the onset of the sixteenth century, the Śrīvaiṣṇavas had come to enjoy increasing influence over the Vijayanagara rulers. The Tātācārya family, for instance,

exercised great power in the court and, during much of Appayya's lifetime, its members occupied the all-important seat of *rājaguru*, a title to which Appayya himself was a worthy if not obvious contender.

This sectarian ideological and political struggle supplies the immediate context of Appayya's work on the epic. The RTSSS can be seen as a brief polemic essay wherein the verse portion, strewn with occasional vocatives addressed to Śiva, stands for the aphoristic *kārikā*s and a self-authored commentary spells out the argument.[17] An important task of this essay is to refute the claim that Vibhīṣaṇa's surrender is the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s chief import (*pradhāna*). The work's last section explicitly presents and denounces this *pūrvapakṣa*, which Appayya believes is utterly ridiculous.[18] To begin with, he argues, when one views the text as a whole, this episode is relatively minor. One would assume that the main import of such a monumental work as the *Rāmāyaṇa* would not be isolated in "a corner of the text" (*koṇe śrutam*), as he puts it. More important, everybody knows that Vibhīṣaṇa's submission to Rāma is not a religious act driven by spiritual motivations but a shrewd political maneuver meant to land him the job of his brother Rāvaṇa, king of Laṅkā (*rājyepsayaiva tu kṛtaṃ tad iti prasiddham*). Vālmīki's characters are in agreement on this topic: Hanumān and Rāma repeatedly give voice to their understanding that Vibhīṣaṇa is in pursuit of material and political gains, and Vibhīṣaṇa himself is open about the incentives he seeks (*śrīrāmacandrapavanātmajayoś sūktyā sākṣāc ca tasya vacanena vibhīṣaṇasya*).[19] One can always theologize Vibhīṣaṇa, adds Appayya, quite possibly referring to a specific passage in Vedānta Deśika's text, but an examination of his own speech clearly reveals the material motivation behind his alliance with Rāma.[20]

In fact, were one to identify submission as the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s chief lesson, other instances of this act present themselves more naturally, insofar as they yielded their actors a higher return. Whereas Vibhīṣaṇa merely gains power and enriches his bank account through his surrender, the crow's famous capitulation to Rāma saves its life, and Rāma's own act of surrender to the monkey Sugrīva helps him find and rescue Sītā, his wife, from Rāvaṇa.[21] This tongue-in-cheek argument is probably meant to nail down the point about Vibhīṣaṇa's canniness as well as to mock the Śrīvaiṣṇavas' effort of combing the *Rāmāyaṇa* for surrender episodes.[22] It also suggests that Rāma, a human who relies on the favors of the monkeys, can hardly be the object of Vibhīṣaṇa's nonsecular devotion.

Indeed, this entire Śrīvaiṣṇava discourse seems to rest on thin theological ice. For Vibhīṣaṇa to surrender to Rāma for the sake of *mokṣa*—supposing,

for the sake of the argument, that this is what he is ultimately after once he gains his brother's throne—he has to know that Rāma is God. But, as Appayya points out, Vibhīṣaṇa has no such knowledge whatsoever (*rāme viṣṇutvabuddhau satyām eva tatprapadanam api kalpyetāpi, na tatra sā buddhis tasyāsti*).[23] Otherwise, it would have made no sense for him to lament Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa and to bemoan their failure to fulfill his wishes when the *nāgapāśa* knocks both brothers unconscious during the epic battle. Whereas believers would never think that God is dead, grief-stricken Vibhīṣaṇa, utterly clueless about Rāma's divinity, fears that with his demise his hopes of wearing the rākṣasa crown are shattered.[24]

Moreover, it takes two to *prapatti*, and Rāma himself is not seen to operate under the assumption that he is God, taking in devotees. Rather, he acts as a king cementing an alliance. When Vibhīṣaṇa approaches him, Rāma pragmatically rewards his new ally by symbolically anointing him king of Laṅkā.[25] Likewise, before falling unconscious to the *nāgapāśa*, he, too, is tormented by the thought that his premature death would void his pledge to make Vibhīṣaṇa king, and he laments the implications of this broken promise for his reputation.[26] It is thus far from clear that Rāma, with his human, partial consciousness, can envision himself as the object of someone else's religious devotion, an awareness that seems necessary if he is to accept Vibhīṣaṇa as a spiritual refuge seeker.

Appayya, I should clarify, does not spell out this last argument, but his student and grandnephew, the great poet Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita, helps to clarify this point. His *Rāmāyaṇasārasaṃgraharaghuvīrastava*, a work whose title clearly echoes that of his great-uncle, narrates the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s central plotline in thirty-three verses addressed to Rāma himself. Significantly, the issue of Vibhīṣaṇa's surrender tops Nīlakaṇṭha's agenda, and it is mentioned, out of narrative order, in the work's very first verse.

> Surely forgetting who you really are—an offspring
> of that milky mash that Brahma gave your father—
> you carefully annihilated the entire race of demons,
> Rāma, but spared the life of Vibhīṣaṇa—
> its heir.[27]

Rāma's killing of Rāvaṇa hinges on his lack of self-knowledge. Pollock himself has already made this very point apropos of Tryambaka's seventeenth-century essay on Vālmīki's poem. According to Tryambaka, "it is only the ignorance of [Rāma's] divinity that ensures that he is in some way not altogether divine; were he to know, there would be, by the condition of the

boon, no possibility of slaying Rāvaṇa."[28] A contemporary of Tryambaka, Nīlakaṇṭha, seems to apply this same logic to Vibhīṣaṇa's case. It is only due to forgetting that he is God that Rāma spares this younger brother of Rāvaṇa; had Rāma been endowed with a full divine consciousness, he would have eliminated the sole heir to this family and finished off the demons. But had he been a self-conscious Viṣṇu, he would not have been able to kill Rāvaṇa in the first place. Sparing Vibhīṣaṇa is thus a kind of a by-product, a price that has to be paid so that the plan of killing Rāvaṇa can be successfully carried out. There is nothing particularly spiritual about Vibhīṣaṇa's surrender, and the decision to accept it is not the result of any divine consciousness but is due precisely to its absence.

To summarize Appayya's argument so far: the major import of the *Rāmāyaṇa* has to pervade the text as a whole (rather than pertain to a minor episode), it has to cohere with the speech and actions of the main characters (and certainly cannot render them incoherent), and it has to inhere in (rather than contradict) the underpinning divine plan, according to which Vibhīṣaṇa, just like Rāma himself, cannot be aware of Rāma's divine status. The Śrīvaiṣṇava interpretation of Vibhīṣaṇa's surrender has to be rejected because it violates these basic interpretive principles, falsifies the morphology of Rāvaṇa's boon, and undermines the perfect unity of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Arguing Locally, Thinking Globally: Appayya's Notion of *Dhvani*

Appayya finds another problem with the Śrīvaiṣṇava interpretation. The *Rāmāyaṇa* is the *ādikāvya*, the first and exemplary work of poetry. It cannot but be a poem of the highest type, namely, *dhvani*. In other words, its chief import has to be suggested rather than narrated directly, which immediately excludes the story of Vibhīṣaṇa's surrender.[29] Appayya believes that Vālmīki's poem is pervaded throughout by such a suggestion. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, he argues, is a text with a thesis: it is all about Śiva's supremacy.

Note that in arguing that Vālmīki's poem is thesis (*vastu*) oriented, Appayya is not simply at odds with his local sectarian adversaries, who obviously privileged other divinities in the text. He also contradicts the age-old claim of Ānandavardhana that the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s predominant suggestion is a *rasa*—the emotional flavor of compassion (*karuṇa*). Perhaps not unlike other public intellectuals of his period, Appayya can be seen as operating simultaneously in the local, regional, and universal discursive arenas. Whereas locally his RTSSS is a piece of sectarian polemics, it can be also read more globally, as part of his overall agenda of reforming Sanskrit's poetic theory.[30]

As in his other writings on *alaṃkāraśāstra*, Appayya is careful not to attack Ānandavardhana personally. Nonetheless, he explicitly refutes his claim that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is a *rasa*-centered work.[31] Indeed, whereas Ānanda only briefly used the *Rāmāyaṇa* to substantiate his theory of *dhvani*,[32] Appayya actually subjects the poem to a thorough, albeit subversive *dhvani* analysis. As we have already seen, Appayya strongly believes that the meaning of a poem cannot be something that pops up sporadically, "in one corner of the text." Thus he sets out to demonstrate precisely that Śiva's supremacy is intimated (rather than explicitly stated) *throughout* the *Rāmāyaṇa*. To prove his claim he cites passages from nearly every part of the *ādikāvya* (as well as quotes from other versions of the *Rāma* story).

Appayya thus maintains that numerous episodes in Vālmīki's poem suggest Śiva's dominion. Take, for instance, the scene in the *Forest Book* in which all the gods are said to worship the sage Agastya while the sage himself worships Śiva alone (verses 2–3); or the building of the *setu* in the *War Book*, a crucial effort, the success of which Rāma attributes to Śiva (6); or Śatrughna's mission to kill the demon Lavaṇa in the poem's *Last Book*, where Viṣṇu's *nārāyaṇāstra* proves ineffective so long as Lavaṇa is armed with Śiva's trident (4); or the fact that Rāma sang the praises of Śiva before slaying Rāvaṇa (7); or the scene following his killing of Rāvaṇa, where Rāma refuses Brahma's invitation to return to heaven but obeys Śiva's request to return to Ayodhyā (8–9).[33]

While this evidence may seem incidental, Appayya's main argument concerns not a series of isolated events but the very logic of Rāma's search for and liberation of Sītā, the main story line of Books 3 through 6 of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The heart of Appayya's essay consists of a claim that this very plotline serves to highlight Śiva's supremacy. Appayya points out that Sītā's abduction and imprisonment were central parts of a divine plan conceived by Śiva. Śiva desired that Rāvaṇa abduct Sītā and hold her captive for one whole year, for only twelve months of imprisoning another man's wife would sufficiently reduce Rāvaṇa's hard-won powers to a level where Rāma could fight and kill him.[34] This is why, in addition to remaining unaware of his divinity, Rāma is constantly kept in the dark about Rāvaṇa and his whereabouts.

In arguing this, Appayya is not only at odds with his predecessor theorists from Kashmir and his contemporary Vaiṣṇava adversaries from the southern peninsula, but also with the bulk of future scholars from Western academia. In particularly, he anticipates Goldman and Masson, who were the first modern readers to demonstrate that Rāma's search for Sītā is based on a paradox: if Rāvaṇa is a celebrated tyrant, whose very name refers to the terror he inflicts worldwide, how is it that once he abducts Sītā, hardly anybody seems to

know who he is and where he resides? More specifically, as they have shown, several individuals interrogated by Rāma seem mysteriously uninformed about Rāvaṇa and his place of residence, in stark contrast to what the text leads us to expect. This disparity, they argued, could be explained by the transformation the *Rāmāyaṇa* has undergone, from a heroic bardic work to a "mythico-religious" poem. In other words, if Rāma was initially a human hero who underwent deification, his enemy had to be similarly upgraded to the status of a cosmic menace. The discrepancy between Rāvaṇa's anonymity and his universal celebrity, just like the inconsistency between Rāma's human awareness and his divinity, is indicative of this process.[35]

The idea that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is not the work of a single, inspired poet was, of course, completely alien to Appayya, as it was to any reader of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in precolonial India. Yet precisely because he believes that Vālmīki authored a unified poem, Appayya shares with Goldman and Masson the attention to potential textual discrepancies such as the mysterious ignorance about Rāvaṇa. Indeed, he closely examines the very same passages these two scholars will discuss four centuries later, and concludes, just as they will, that Rāma's informants should have known better. Moreover, he goes one step further to argue that they did, in fact, have complete knowledge of the demon king and his capital but *chose* not to share it with pitiful Rāma, lest he find Rāvaṇa prematurely. Appayya thus argues that a succession of actors resorted to procrastination, false promises, and outright lies to ensure the success of Śiva's blueprint. Vālmīki, for his part, consciously alluded to their intentions as part of *his* plan to intimate Śiva's greatness.

Take, for instance, Rāma's dramatic encounter with Jaṭāyus, the only witness to Sītā's abduction. When Rāma finds him, gravely wounded from Rāvaṇa's blows, the vulture king is bleeding to death. Rāma begs him for information about the identity and location of Sītā's abductor. Jaṭāyus answers by confirming that, indeed, the kidnapper was Rāvaṇa, the king of the *rākṣasa*s, whose ancestry he finds time to narrate. Then he goes on to comfort Rāma, prophesizing his killing of Rāvaṇa and reunion with Sītā, while completely glossing over Rāma's explicit and dire request for more useful facts. He then dies, to Rāma's pathetic cries: "Tell me! Tell me!" (*brūhi brūhi*). Appayya quotes the whole passage, noting that Jaṭāyus was well aware of his fast-approaching death and that he realized how pressing Rāma's request was. Still, he ignored the one question that mattered to Rāma and withheld from him information that was clearly in his possession.[36]

Appayya finds Jaṭāyus's silence revealing. Indeed, he sees the fact that the poet himself offers no explanation for his mysterious silence as particularly

telling.[37] Even Goldman and Masson, while looking at the very same passage, seem to imply that Jaṭāyus's "peculiar and disappointing answer" reflected the poet's efforts to heighten the drama and allow the story to unfold.[38] But for Appayya, Jaṭāyus's reticence creates more than suspense. Rather, it reflects the cosmic design of Śiva and the poetic design of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Jaṭāyus withholds Rāvaṇa's address from Rāma because he takes his orders from Śiva, whose concern is to prevent an untimely encounter between Rāma and the demon king. Vālmīki, for his part, keeps silent about the vulture's motivation because he wishes to suggest, rather than to explicitly give away, Śiva's might.[39]

If Jaṭāyus's behavior is peculiar, what to say of Kabandha's? This monster—a mammoth, legless, and headless torso equipped with huge arms and a mouth in its belly—has been cursed to posses this caricatured form until he is killed and cremated by Rāma. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa come across him in the forest shortly after the tragic death of Jaṭāyus and interrogate him about Sītā and Rāvaṇa. Kabandha says up front that he does not know Sītā but promises that once the brothers relieve him from his curse he will direct them to someone who does know of her. About Rāvaṇa he is more ambiguous. He first says that until he is cremated he cannot access his divine knowledge about Rāvaṇa.[40] Later he promises to refer Rāma to someone better informed.[41] Goldman and Masson find it strange that Kabandha's divine knowledge includes data about someone who knows Rāvaṇa but not about the famous Rāvaṇa himself.[42] This they see as a narrative problem, further indicating how the original Rāma story has been tampered with.

But the text presents a problem only if we assume that Kabandha is telling the truth, and he certainly does not appear very credible. As several commentators have noted, Kabandha and Rāma, not unlike poker players, are each manipulating the other to show his hand first: Rāma requests information before committing to cremating the demon, while Kabandha demands to be burned before providing Rāma with any leads.[43] As Pollock himself has already noted in his illuminating annotation to the passage in question, Kabandha's vague promises thus "constitute a (false) inducement to get Rāma to be the first."[44] Appayya's claim that Kabandha was simply bluffing thus seems quite plausible.[45] Indeed, once cremated, Kabandha breaks both his promises. He does not recall Rāvaṇa's abode, and even worse, the informer he names, the monkey Sugrīva, himself knows nothing about Rāvaṇa and his whereabouts.[46]

Or so he claims. But Appayya, the Sherlock Holmes of Sanskrit literature, presents compelling evidence that Sugrīva's ignorance is faked.[47] The most incriminating bit of evidence against him is found in the *ādikāvya*'s *Last Book*, where the sage Agastya fills Rāma in on the background of Rāma's own story.

Agastya tells Rāma how Vālin, Sugrīva's brother, once came to know Rāvaṇa. Vālin and Rāvaṇa, he reports, cemented an alliance by kindling a ritual fire, after which they joined arms and together entered the monkey city Kiṣkindhā. There, Agastya adds, Rāvaṇa stayed as Vālin's guest for a whole month, "as though he was his brother Sugrīva." Indeed, Rāvaṇa's visit was not a secret stopover but an official diplomatic affair, and the demon king was joined in Kiṣkindhā by a large delegation of his ministers.[48] "That after this Sugrīva would remain ignorant of his [Rāvaṇa's] home, heroic record, and so on," Appayya concludes, "is absolutely extremely implausible."[49]

In short, dying Jaṭāyus avoided Rāma's most urgent question, Kabandha deceived the grief-stricken hero with false promises, and Sugrīva lied to him straight-faced. Appayya strongly believes that this cannot be a mere coincidence, and that all three creatures were actually collaborators, part of one large scheme. In his persona as a literary detective, Appayya implicates the three, points to their possible motivations, and names Śiva as the ringleader in a conspiracy of cosmic proportions.[50] Poor Rāma appears to have fallen victim to a sophisticated global crime syndicate. Its members have arranged for the kidnapping of his wife and then prolonged his separation from her. Thus they have successfully manipulated him into unwittingly acting as their hit man in the assassination of their archenemy, at a time of their choice. In making his case against these characters, Appayya relies heavily on the written testimony of one crucial witness, Vālmīki (although others are also summoned to the stand). A keen observer, Vālmīki realized the nature of this sting operation, and, although his aspiration to the highest poetic standards prevented him from addressing it explicitly, he left clear clues about its mastermind, Śiva, for the sake of future readers and believers.

One does not have to adopt Appayya's Śaiva program, or even his unique notion of *dhvani*, to realize his profound insight into the text as a unit. If Rāma's lack of divine awareness is inherent to the underlying divine plan, it is inevitable that the text be populated with characters who understand Rāma's identity and role better than he does, and whose responsibility is to ensure that he remain ignorant, as long as necessary, by any means necessary. As Pollock has already noted, Tryambaka and Govindarāja are of the opinion that Indra, king of the gods, intentionally avoids Rāma so as to not endanger the killing of Rāvaṇa by letting slip the secret of Rāma's divinity in front of him.[51] It makes perfect sense that the paradox pertaining to Rāvaṇa's anonymous celebrity is the flip side of the paradox of Rāma's human divinity. Neither, according to Appayya, is an indicator of real textual discrepancies. On the contrary, they prove how rigorous and consistent Vālmīki was in adhering to the logic of his

work's cosmic blueprint.

Concluding Remarks

Let us conclude by briefly considering how Appayya's message fared with his various interlocutors. We can see why texts such as the RTSSS contributed to Appayya's fame as a local Śaiva hero and how such verbal confrontations with his Vaiṣṇava adversaries were transformed, in the hagiographies, into actual duels. The Śrīvaiṣṇavas, for their part, were not in the least impressed by his arguments and dismissed them outright.[52] Nor does it seem likely that the guardians of the Kashmiri *dhvani* school would have looked favorably on Appayya's subversive use of this concept. After all, it was a similar notion of suggestion as a deductive, intellectual process, and a similar view of the reader as a detective, that brought Jagannātha's wrath down on Appayya.[53]

So perhaps it is us, his future interlocutors, who should pay closer attention to Appayya's arguments. We often criticize the tendency of traditional readers to exculpate their heroes from faults. Jewish commentators show great ingenuity in saving Abraham from the guilt of lying to Abimelech, just as the South Asian commentators of the *Mahābhārata* basically rewrite the text of the epic to render true the false résumé that Yudhiṣṭhira gives King Virāṭa.[54] In both cases, the honesty of the characters is arguably saved against the letter and spirit of their texts. Appayya, however, is willing to go so far as to assume that Vālmīki's heroes are either pathetically ignorant or straight-faced liars, only to allow the text to remain consistent.[55] This bold hermeneutical move that Appayya shares with some of his contemporaries should not be taken lightly.

While we do not necessarily share his premises and beliefs, we cannot but be impressed by Appayya's sensitivity to questions of character integrity and narrative congruity. His reading of the text highlights the inalterability of Rāma's uniquely hyphenated and only partially conscious identity. Both insisting on Rāma's essential humanity, as did the Indologists in their search for the original "heroic bardic epic," and overly deifying him, as in the Śrīvaiṣṇava allegorization of Vibhīṣaṇa's surrender, potentially compromise the delicate balance between the human and divine components of Rāma, as dictated by the logic of the boon that Pollock has described.

Notes

[1] On the latter, see the essay by Rao in this volume.

[2] Pollock 1991: 3, 19.

[3] Ibid., 4–5.

[4] Pollock 1986: 25.

[5] Ibid., 25–32.

[6] Ibid., 25.

[7] Ibid., 28.

[8] Pollock 1991: 19–20.

[9] Rao 2006. See also Lutgendorf 1994.

[10] Bronner and Loewy Shacham 2006.

[11] For the traditional accounts on Appayya's mentorship of Bhaṭṭoji, see Ramesan 1972: 130–31. Although tradition also reports a meeting between Appayya and Jagannātha (Ramesan 1972: 131–34; Bronner and Tubb 2008: 87–88), their lives did not overlap, and Jagannātha wrote his critique of Appayya, the *Citramīmāṃsākhaṇḍana*, several decades after Appayya's death.

[12] These include the Rameśvara Śrī Śaṅkara Mandapam in Rameshwaram and the Adhi Śrī Bhīmarāja Gosvāmi Māṭha in Tanjore.

[13] Ramesan 1972: 70–77.

[14] For a summary of the work's contents, see Bhatt 1982.

[15] See *Abhayapradānasāra,* adhikāra 4, 269–78, for a lengthy discussion of Vibhīṣaṇa's surrender in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and its theological implications. I am grateful to Ajay Rao for introducing me to this work. For an in-depth study of the Śrīvaiṣṇava notion of *prapatti*, see Raman 2007.

[16] See the essay by Rao in this volume.

[17] On other pedagogical and polemic *stotra*s by Appayya, see Bronner 2007.

[18] *apahāsāyaiva kalpate* (*RTSSS,* 320). Significantly, Appayya refers to his opponents anonymously, never mentioning Vedānta Deśika by name. This is in keeping with his complicated approach to his important Vaiṣṇava predecessor, whose genius he clearly admired. Appayya wrote the only commentary on Vedānta Deśika's monumental poem, the *Yadavābhyudaya*, praising its author as *kavitārkikasiṃha,* a "lion among poets and philosophers" (*Yādavābhyudaya,* verse 13 of the introduction to the commentary). His *Varadarājastava* could likewise be seen as a gesture to an earlier *stotra* to the same god by his forerunner, the *Varadarājapañcāśat*. There is also a reference to a commentary of his on Vedānta Deśika's *Haṃsasandeśa* (see Ramesan 1972: 115). At the same time, Appayya clearly differed from his

forerunner on major theological and philosophical questions. Yet, whereas he had no qualms about personally attacking Madhva—he famously authored the *Madhvatantramukhamardana* (A Slap in the Face of Madhva's System)—his critique of Vedānta Deśika's views, however emphatic, is never personal or disrespectful.

[19] The quotes are all from *RTSSS*, 321.

[20] The *Rāmāyaṇa* verse in question is *parityaktā mayā laṅkā mitrāṇi ca dhanāni ca | bhavadgataṃ me rājyaṃ ca jīvitaṃ ca sukhāni ca ||* (*Rāmāyaṇa*, 6.13.5). Vedānta Deśika quotes this as yet another proof of the totality of Vibhīṣaṇa's surrender, which included all his worldly possessions and social ties (*Abhayapradānasāra*, 274). But Appayya points to the fact that the second half of the verse reveals that Vibhīṣaṇa eyes the throne even as he is surrendering: *tena laṅkādhipatyādikaṃ tvayā mahyaṃ dātavyam iti vyajyate* (*RTSSS*, 323).

[21] *RTSSS*, 321: *syāc cet tad īśa phalagauravataḥ pradhānam ikṣvākunāyakasamācaritaṃ tathā syāt | tac cāpi vāyasakṛtaṃ dhanalābhato 'pi dārātmalābham adhikaṃ hi budhā vadanti ||* The prose under the verse reads, *rājyayogepsayā vibhīṣaṇena prapadanaṃ kṛtam.* [*dārepsayā śrīrāmacandreṇa sugrīvaprapadanaṃ kṛtam.*] *'sugrīvaṃ śaraṇaṃ gataḥ' iti bahudhāmreḍitatvāt*. The middle sentence is omitted from the Hyderabad edition but is supplied by the earlier Madras edition in Telugu script (*Rāmāyaṇasārasaṃgrahavivaraṇa*, 24).

[22] Vedānta Deśika lists a plethora of instances of surrender to Rāma in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and also discusses their various rewards. Significantly, his list includes the crow and Sugrīva, both of whom surrendered to Rāma (*Abhayapradānasāra*, adhikāra 3, 252–69, especially 56–59 for the crow and 60–62 for Sugrīva). Appayya's reference to the opposite act of Rāma's surrender *to* the monkey king seems particularly pointed.

[23] *RTSSS*, 322.

[24] Ibid.: *tathā sati nāgapāśabandhena mūrchitaṃ rāmacandraṃ dṛṣṭvaiva pralāpānupapatteḥ. na viṣṇor ittham āpat kadācit api prasajyeta, abhinayamātraṃ kiṃcitkālam ity āśvāsopapatteḥ.*

[25] Ibid., 323–24.

[26] Ibid., 322; cf. *Rāmāyaṇa* 6.39.22. There are minor variants here between Appayya's reading and the text of the critical edition.

[27] *Rāmāyaṇasārasaṃgraharaghuvīrastava* 1: *vedhovitīrṇaviśadānnavivartatāṃ svām aprasmaran raghupate kulatantum asya | manye rarakṣitha vibhīṣaṇam apramatto niḥśeṣayann api kulaṃ rajanīcarāṇām ||*

[28] Pollock 1984b: 238.

[29] *RTSSS*, 320.

[30] On this agenda, see Bronner 2002; Bronner 2004; and Tubb and Bronner 2008.

[31] *RTSSS*, 324: *yady api dhvanyamānatvāviśeṣād rāmāyaṇe tatra tatra vyañjitaḥ*

śṛṅgāravīrakaruṇādbhutaraudrādiko raso devatāgurunṛpapitṛputrādiviṣayarati-rūpo bhāvo 'pi prādhānyam arhati, tathāpi rāmāyaṇe pravitataḥ śivapāramyarūpo vastudhvaniḥ prādhānyam aśnuta ity atra nāsti saṃśītyavakāśaḥ. Appayya also seems to refute here a competing argument that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is all about *bhakti*.

[32] *Dhvanyāloka*, 4.5.

[33] This procedure of searching the *Rāmāyaṇa* for piecemeal evidence for the supremacy of one god or another has Śrīvaiṣṇava precedents. Vedānta Deśika, for instance, cites Rāma's breaking of Śiva's bow and Brahma's praise of Rāma in Vālmīki's text as proof of Viṣṇu's superiority over Śiva (*Abhayapradānasāra*, adhikāra 2, 248–49).

[34] *RTSSS*, 308: *mahatā tapasā yukto rāvaṇas tapovīryabhraṃśaṃ kārayitvā raghunāthamukhena hantavyaḥ. tattapovīryabhraṃśaś ca ciram tatra sītāvāsanenaiva labhyate. tadvāse hi tasyāṃ nirantaraṃ mohitātmā sarvaṃ tapas tyajet. tadānīṃ raghunāthena hantuṃ śakyo bhavati, nānyatheti*. Appayya supplies ample information from the Skandapurāṇa in support of this scenario (*RTSSS*, 309–11).

[35] Goldman and Masson 1969: 100.

[36] *RTSSS*, 305: *iha jaṭāyur bāhyāntaracihnaiḥ kṣanāntare 'pi svasya jīvanānuvṛtter daurlabhyaṃ saṃbhāvayan vyāharaṇaśaktikāla eva rāvaṇavadhe tvaritasya śrīrāmacandrasya praśnaviṣayeṣv avaśyajijñāsitarāvaṇanilayapraśnasyaiva prathamam uttaraṃ vaktavyam iti svayam eva jñātuṃ śakto 'pi tad vaktum iva upakramya tadaspṛṣṭaṃ darśanādikam anyad evāha. tato viśrāntisamaye "putro vaiśrāvasaḥ sākṣād bhrātā vaiśravaṇasya ca" ityetāvad evoktvā, itaḥ paraṃ rāvaṇanilayavacanaṃ prāptakālam āsīd iti cintayaty api rāghave divaṃ gataḥ.*

[37] Ibid., 307: *tatra dṛṣṭaḥ kaścana hetur asti cet, kavināvaśyam ucyeta.*

[38] Goldman and Masson 1969: 98.

[39] *RTSSS*, 307: *tadanuktyā tadabhāvaṃ niścitya parameśvarasaṃkalpa eva tatra hetur vivakṣita iti sahṛdayāḥ svayam eva jñāsyantīty abhipretya teṣām avacanamātraṃ kavir nibabandheti niścīyate*. This passage refers also to the equally puzzling silence of Kabandha and Sugrīva, on which see below.

[40] *Rāmāyaṇa*, 3.67.26: *adagdhasya hi vijñātuṃ śaktir asti na me prabho | rākṣasaṃ taṃ mahāvīryaṃ sītā yena hṛtā tava ||*

[41] Ibid., 3.67.29: *vakṣyāmi taṃ mahāvīra yas taṃ jñāsyati rākṣasam.*

[42] Goldman and Masson 1969: 99. Even more suspicious, however, is Kabandha's foresight concerning his allegedly severed memories. If his knowledge will become accessible to him only after he is cremated, how can he predict that it will consist of the name of an informant who knows Sītā and Rāvaṇa?

[43] Pollock 1991: 351, ad. 3.67.23.

[44] Ibid., 351–52, ad. 3.67.26.

[45] *RTSSS*, 301: *saṃsūcya vakṣya iti nāha kabandhaḥ.*

[46] *Rāmāyaṇa*, 4.7.2: *na jāne nilayaṃ tasya sarvathā pāparakṣasaḥ | sāmarthyaṃ vikramaṃ vāpi dauṣkuleyasya vā kulam ||*

[47] *RTSSS*, verse 13: *etadajñānam abhyanayad atra ca sūryasūnuḥ*; and p. 306: *sugrīvas tu pṛṣṭaḥ sarvaprakāreṇāpi rāvaṇaṃ tannilayaṃ ca jānann eva kathamapi na jānāmīti jñānam apalalāpa.*

[48] *Rāmāyaṇa*, 7.34.41–3; cf. *RTSSS*, 306: *anyonyalambitakarau tatas tau harirākṣasau | kiṣkindhāṃ viśato hṛṣṭau siṃhau giriguhām iva || sa tatra māsam uṣitaḥ sugrīva iva rāvaṇaḥ | amātyair āgatair nīcas* [Appayya reads *nītas*] *trailokyotsādanārthibhiḥ || evam etat purāvṛttaṃ bālinā rāvaṇaḥ prabho | dharṣitaś ca kṛtaś cāpi bhrātā pāvakasaṃnidhau ||*

[49] *RTSSS*, 306: *tataḥ sthānavikramādikaṃ sugrīvaḥ na jānātīti etad atyantāsaṃbhāvitam eva.*

[50] On Śiva's plan he provides plenty of information; see especially ibid., 308-311. On Appayya as a literary detective, see Bronner and Tubb 2008: 81–83.

[51] Pollock 1984b: 239–40.

[52] There is a long passage in Govindarāja's commentary on *Rāmāyaṇa* 1.5.1, where he asserts Viṣṇu's supremacy and refutes many of Appayya's claims (see the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki 1983–: vol 1, 84–87). Although Govindarāja does not mention Appayya by name, the references seem unmistakable. He thus flatly rejects as ridiculous "some recent author's" claim that the *Rāmāyaṇa* suggests Śiva's supremacy (*yat kenacin navīnena jalpitaṃ vyañjanāvṛttyā śivaparaṃ rāmāyaṇam iti tad apahāsyam eva*, 85) and refutes many of Appayya's specific interpretations of passages in Vālmīki's poem, from his reference to the praises of Śiva in Agastya's hermitage to the all-important surrender of Vibhīṣaṇa. All this strongly suggests an almost immediate response to Appayya's arguments from Govindarāja, who probably composed his commentary around 1550–75. I am grateful to Ajay Rao for referring me to this passage and for sharing with me his thoughts about Govindarāja's date.

[53] Bronner and Tubb 2008: 83–86.

[54] The tendency to exculpate Abraham from the sin of lying begins as early as the Old Testament, which supplies another version of the same story, and continues in later literature (Fishbane 1985: 11–12). I am indebted to Ronnie Goldstein for the fascinating conversations we have had on this topic. For the efforts to save Yudhiṣṭhira, his brothers, and Draupadī from intentionally misleading Virāṭa, see Goldman 1992: 102–3; and Bronner 2010: 181–83.

[55] This point, too, is repeated by Appayya's grandnephew, Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita, who stresses the irony inherent in Rāma's ignorance of Rāvaṇa's address: *martyātmatām abhininīṣasi cet tad astu martyeṣu kiṃ bhuvi na santi parāvarajñāḥ | boddhuṃ svato 'pi nilayaṃ tad arer vinaiva dainyaṃ raghūdvaha kiyat kiyad anvakārṣīḥ ||* (*Rāmāyaṇasārasaṃgraharaghuvīrastava*, 11).

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3

Expert Nation: An Epic of Antiquity in the World of Modernity

Robert Goldman

No reflection on the manifold contributions Sheldon Pollock has made to the field of Indology and his diverse and profound interventions in many areas of South Asian literary studies and intellectual history can ignore his critical role as one of the major contributors to the lengthy and complex project to produce a complete and fully annotated translation of the critical edition of the *Vālmīkirāmāyaṇa*. Indeed, it is in large measure due to his heroic efforts in translating and annotating both the *Ayodhyā*- and *Araṇyakāṇḍas* that the massive work is now nearing its conclusion.

In thinking about the many years during which I have been involved with Professor Pollock and the other contributors to the project, I have been frequently struck by a virtually unique characteristic of the monumental poem. To a degree shared perhaps to some extent with the *Mahābhārata* and few, if any, other Indic texts, the *Rāmāyaṇa* exists in a vast and complex interpretive universe in which virtually everyone who has grown up in an Indian cultural environment, whether in South Asia or beyond, has or believes he or she has a fairly comprehensive knowledge of at least some version of this ancient text. This is true of both scholarly and lay communities regardless of religious persuasion, if any, ethnicity, or social status. Indeed, as Pollock has pointed out in his influential article, "*Rāmāyaṇa* and the Political Imagination in India," virtually all representations of the story of Rāma, whether in poetry, prose, drama, dance, sculpture, painting, film, comic books, or TV serialization "are always *retellings of a text everyone knows*" (Pollock 1993: 263).

The interest displayed in the epic is, moreover, not purely literary or dispassionate. For many it is a core element in their understanding of religion, gender, and social relations, and so scholars, especially those of non-Indian origin who publish or present papers that are read or heard by members of the worldwide community of South Asians, soon come to understand that their views—even quite technical ones—may be received with far more passionate responses than one can imagine being provoked by similar presentations on,

say, texts such as the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, or the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

Responses to scholarly analyses of the epic can, of course, vary significantly from expressions of pride and pleasure that a foreigner knows so much about a treasured cultural artifact, to detailed questioning and critique, to, in some cases, anger and hostility over what may be perceived as insults directed at revered cultural and religious figures such as Rāma and Sītā. The sensitivity of representation of such figures has been called to public attention again just recently by the news that the famous Indian painter M. F. Hussain, who, hounded out of his native country for over nine years by numerous threats and lawsuits on the part of Hindu nationalist groups, has decided to accept an offer of citizenship by the government of Qatar. At issue, of course, are his paintings of *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes in ways that are regarded by some as insulting to the sentiments of Hindus.

In light of this, Western scholars are often not fully prepared for the reception their presentations may generate in India. The great majority of those attending talks on subjects like the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* (especially the *Bhagavadgītā*) in the West will have either a general familiarity with the subject or, in many cases, none at all. But in the case of such presentations in India, the audience, although it may be quite diverse, consisting of Sanskrit scholars, historians, scientists, journalists, political and religious activists, and laypeople of many backgrounds, will, for the most part, regard themselves as possessed of intimate and expert knowledge regarding the poem, its contents, its characters, and its proper interpretation.

Moreover, this knowledge is far from being a mere passive familiarity with the basic elements in the story. There is, as well, a profound investment in the tale, which manifests itself in the lively and often heated discussions that follow the presentations and in the colorful and sometimes disturbing re-presentation of one's lecture in the newspapers and electronic media.

What has struck me about these encounters, however, is the detailed knowledge of the text these audiences display and, more importantly, the profound investment they appear to have in a kind of rationalization of its contents. In fact, the collectivity of this kind of analysis and rationalization can be seen as an interesting continuing element in the long, diverse, and complex receptive history of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Indeed, I very frequently receive e-mail and snail mail communications from lay readers in the worldwide Indian community congratulating or, far more frequently, chastising me for what the authors regard, respectively, as contributions or horrendous, even offensive, blunders in our translation and interpretation of this most beloved text.

For example, for the past several years I have been carrying on an e-mail and mail correspondence with a retired expatriate Indian mathematician who is both admiring and yet sharply critical of our work on the translation project and who has devoted himself to a major project whose goal is to prove conclusively that the *Uttarakāṇḍa* of Vālmīki's great work is a spurious and late addition to the original epic, or, as he calls it, a "Pretender Kāṇḍa." His arguments, I hasten to add, are, even when, as is often the case, I disagree with him, by no means to be dismissed out of hand. Indeed, many of them are cogent and betray a thoughtful, if frequently apologetic, reading of the poem as a whole.

Most interesting to me is the way in which many of these lay readers of the Rāma story, particularly in the monumental poetic version ascribed to the legendary "First Poet" (*ādikavi*) Vālmīki, appear to approximate and reflect the attitudes and concerns of the learned body of Sanskrit scholars who, from around the twelfth century to the eve of modernity, authored the substantial corpus of surviving commentaries on the poem. In what follows I would like to discuss some of these attitudes and concerns and what they can tell us about the reception of a great, central, and polyvalent text like the *Rāmāyaṇa*. This in turn can, I believe, help us, in the spirit of Pollock's many contributions to the field of *Rāmāyaṇa* studies, to understand how this text has continued to grip the religious and political imagination of Indians from antiquity to the present day.

Let me turn, then, to the work of the older commentators, their agendas, concerns, and techniques of exegesis, before returning to a discussion of the reading of the ancient epic by its corps of modern day lay exegetes.[1]

As has become amply clear to us over the years of our close reading of more than a dozen Sanskrit commentaries on the "First Poem" (*ādikāvya*), the commentators have a number of rather different concerns that underlie their projects. These concerns are driven by the four principal levels on which the poem has functioned in Indian, and most particularly Hindu, society from antiquity. These functional levels have, naturally, shifted in emphasis over the long course of the text's history and are also emphasized to a greater or lesser extent in the work of the different commentators, who tend, not unexpectedly, to fall into different regional, sectarian, and interpretive schools.

A brief survey of the four principal levels on which the text has been received will enable us to better understand the concerns of the commentators and the sometimes sharp and bitter differences they have in some areas. This will, at the same time, serve as an explanation of why and how the text has established itself so closely and firmly at the heart of the culture's sense of

itself. For, perhaps more than any other document in the ancient and profusely literate cultural history of South Asia, the *Rāmāyaṇa* has lodged itself at the foundation of several critical areas of ideology. One of these, of course, is the aesthetic. Alone among the innumerable folk and literary reworkings of the *Rāmakathā*, Vālmīki's version claims for itself the status of and has been largely accepted as the first and most sublime example of *kāvya*, poetry. Next, the work functions powerfully as a narrativized example of *smṛti,* a poetic discourse on *dharma* through which the central sociopolitical ideology of Vedic-Brahmanic civilization has been widely disseminated via the mechanisms of the poem's gripping story line and its recurrent didactic excurses on policy (*nīti*) and ethics (*dharma*). This is an area whose critical importance to our understanding of the destiny of the poem and its reception in late medieval and modern India has been powerfully explored by Pollock in the article mentioned above. Still more significant, perhaps, for this understanding is the work's critical role as a core document of Vaiṣṇava theology. For, as Pollock has beautifully demonstrated in a number of scholarly papers and in the original and incisive introduction to his translation of the *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, the poem, despite the long-standing contrary opinion of many Western scholars, is, in its original design, intended as an account of the earthly career of the supreme godhead. As such, he has shown, the divinity of Rāma, although occluded by the demands of the narrative, is everywhere present in the poem and can therefore not be seen as having been tacked onto a preexisting secular heroic epic by the late authors of the *Bāla-* and *Uttarakāṇḍas*. In this way the work serves as an entertaining poem, a guide to proper and improper social and political action, and a sacred scripture.

But, as a critical underpinning to the complex framing and structure of this belle-lettristic, śāstric, and theological opus, its interpretive community, commentators, *kīrtaṅkaras*, *rasikas*, *rāmāyaṇīs*, and lay audiences in general have read the work as an *itihāsa*, a piece of genuine history, an accurate and inspired chronicle of actual events that took place in real time in real places, albeit in a prior age of the world when, as in parallel texts such as the Bible, prodigies and wonders not common in later times were everyday facts of life.

With this very brief schematic in mind, let us look at how the issues relevant to each of these functional levels inform the project of the commentators. In reading the *Rāmāyaṇa* as the *fons et origo* of all poetic composition, a distinction that the transmitters of the text lay powerful and explicit claim to in the work's opening chapters, the commentators are in implicit agreement that its author's reputation as the world's first and finest poet should not be diminished. This is particularly important as the work, despite its cachet,

is (*pace* Pollock)[2] in large measure, a semi-oral, semi-formulaic epic poem filled with rather pedestrian narratives, lengthy lists, and didactic passages. It is often repetitive and sometimes obscure and bears every sign of having been handled and sometimes mishandled by redactors and scribes of varying talent from many parts of the subcontinent over many centuries. As such, it is, from the standpoint of the canons and aesthetic of Sanskrit literary theory (*sāhityaśāstra*), in many ways inferior to the famous later "great poems" (*mahākāvyas*) such as those of Bhāravi, Māgha, Kālidāsa, Śrīharṣa, and so on—works that are supposed to have drawn their inspiration from Vālmīki.

But, given the importance and prestige of the poem and its legendary author, the commentators, generally well versed in literary theory though they are, are particularly reluctant to allow Vālmīki to stand accused of poetic *doṣas*, violations of the generally accepted canons of literary style. Thus in those numerous instances, for example, in which the poem appears to be stylistically flawed by such features as the repetition of the same character's name or another noun in the same verse, commentators will jump in to spare the poet the charge of *punarukti*, or repetitiveness, by claiming that there are really two separate sentences in the verse or group of verses in question or that the two instances of the same term are to be taken in different senses. Again, where, as is very often the case, the poet uses a string of nouns all of which appear to be roughly synonymous, commentators will take great pains to try to show that each term has a different, specific, technical meaning in the context. In these cases, the commentators often disagree as to what these meanings are, but the approach and purpose are shared.

This tendency is also frequently displayed in aid of sparing the poet the charge of narrative inconsistency. Given the genetic history of the work and its numerous recensional variations, this is not a trivial matter. In many cases there are apparent inconsistencies. Sometimes the same episode is narrated more than once with significant differences in detail from one version to another. Thus, for example, as I have discussed at some length elsewhere (Goldman 2006b), all versions of the received text contain at least four accounts of the circumstances that led to the well-known narcolepsy of the gargantuan *rākṣasa* prince Kumbhakarṇa. These retellings, put, respectively, in the mouths of various epic characters, appear to differ radically from one another in their specifications of the duration of the monster's periods of dormancy. Here the commentators engage in elaborate parsing of the passages, deploying the powerful resources of Sanskrit for polysemy, synonymity, metonymy, and allusive discourse to try to show that all the disparate versions are, in fact, specifying the same period of time.

In several of the epic's many battle scenes, a character, normally a *rākṣasa* warrior who had earlier been shown to have been slain, appears to fight and die again. Here again the commentators will intervene to argue, not implausibly, that we are dealing with two characters of the same name.

In some cases a commentarial intervention designed to exculpate the poet from the charge of inconsistency can be amusing, as when a commentator's ingenuity and close reading are put to work to recover internal evidence from the narrative to lay a contradiction at the feet of one of the epic cast of characters rather than those of the First Poet. This can be seen, for example, in the critical area of the epic's internal chronology, a subject that, as I will discuss further below, is very central to the concerns of the commentators. Govindarāja notices one important contradiction. He observes that, in the *Sundarakāṇḍa*, Sītā tells Hanumān that she has only one month remaining of the year that Rāvaṇa had allowed her before she will either have to submit to him or be eaten (5.35.8 and notes; cf. 5.36.50 and notes), whereas Rāvaṇa himself had told Sītā that she had two months remaining before this grim deadline (3.54.22; 5.20.8).[3] Govindarāja (*ad* 6.112.1) explains the discrepancy by observing that Sītā's calculation is correct, while Rāvaṇa's is a result of his intoxication brought on by drinking too much honey-wine (*avaśiṣṭau dvau māsāv ity uktir madhupānamattatayāvivekakṛtā*).

At a larger structural level, commentators such as Kataka and Nāgeśa will champion one way of dividing the poem's chapters (*sarga*s) over another on the grounds that alternative divisions of the text would violate literary critical prescriptions as to the topical and metrical conditions that should mark the boundaries of chapters in a narrative poem.[4]

Let me now turn to the second of the functional levels of the text mentioned above, the level of *dharma-* and *nītiśāstra* or the sociopolitical. The *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* is widely understood to be one of traditional India's most fundamental handbooks of social, ethical, moral, and political behavior. Indeed, in its staunch support of the *varṇāśrama* system, the principal armature of the Brahmanical social order, its numerous examples of both powerfully normative and horrifically counternormative characters and actions, and its frequent debates and disquisitions on *dharma* and *nīti* (Goldman 1997, 2006a), it has continued to serve this function for many centuries.

Nonetheless, in a work of this antiquity and complexity, it is not surprising to find that there are occasional episodes in which exemplary characters behave in ways that appear to violate ethical norms or the strict patterns of deference that characterize the rigorous hierarchy of the normative society.

In cases in which the integrity of the epic hero is called into question

the commentators and later interpreters and even the poet himself are quick to leap to his defense. Of course, the classic example is the well-known *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* episode of the killing of Vālin (*vālivadha*). Here scholiasts and authors of modern "Anthologies of Doubts" (*śaṅkāvalis*) are in effect merely following the lead of Rāma himself, who feels it necessary to rationalize his action in the face of the fallen monkey's condemnation, and even of Vālin himself, whom the poet shows to be ultimately persuaded by Rāma's arguments at 4.17–18 (on this, see Lefeber 1994: 45–50; and Goldman 2003a).

But a more illustrative example of what I mean can be found in the commentators' convoluted parsing of verse 6.115.33, where the poet seems to have Prince Bharata, in an apparent violation of protocol, offer his respectful salutation to his younger brother Lakṣmaṇa before doing so to his senior sister-in-law, Sītā. Space will not permit me to detail here the various complex interpretive strategies employed by the different commentators to avoid the appearance of this social gaffe. Suffice it to say that they include careful parsing of the grammar and arguments based on *purāṇic* and other sources to demonstrate that Lakṣmaṇa is actually older than Bharata. They support this unusual claim by arguing that even if Lakṣmaṇa is chronologically junior to Bharata, he is "older" in terms of status either because of his service to Rāma or because of his birth being the result of his mother's ingestion of a portion of the *pāyasam* that had first been offered to the most senior queen, Kausalyā, Rāma's mother (Goldman 2009).

The theological aspect of the text, in many ways its most important element, is, naturally enough, the object of the most elaborate discussions and the most heated debates among the commentators. In these discussions the principal concern is the counterintuitive representation of the supreme godhead as a figure who not only appears to be a man but also is shown, it seems, to genuinely suffer like one. Like Rāma, other popular avatars of the Lord, most notably Kṛṣṇa, take human birth and generally conceal their divinity from their friends and foes alike. But these figures are never shown to suffer emotionally or physically, to be in peril, or to be in less than perfect control of their world. Rāma, however, is quite different. Not only does he lose his kingdom and his beloved wife, but he is repeatedly shown to suffer grievously and even spectacularly from the loss. This is also the case in those repeated instances in which others who are dear to him, such as Jaṭāyus and Lakṣmaṇa are or appear to be slain. And his suffering is not merely emotional. On the contrary, he is repeatedly shown to be grievously wounded by his enemies, especially Indrajit. Agonized, paralyzed, and bleeding profusely, he requires, on more than one occasion, immediate intervention, medical

or supernatural, to survive and recover. This treatment of the epic hero is a particular if not to say unique feature of Vālmīki's rendition of the Rāma story. Later versions, especially those that form part of the Vaiṣṇava canon, begin by at least the medieval period to represent the divinity of Rāma in much the same way as that of Kṛṣṇa, thus backgrounding or eliminating evidence of nescience or vulnerability that are never found, and indeed are unimaginable, in the narratives of the life of the latter.[5]

For the commentators, this presents a hermeneutical challenge. Now, as Pollock has so persuasively pointed out in the pieces mentioned above, much of this depiction of the mortality and vulnerability on Rāma's part is to be traced to Vālmīki's unusually strict adherence to the terms of Rāvaṇa's boon, which immunize the archvillain from harm at the hands of all superhuman beings.

But this does not necessarily imply that adherence to the terms of Rāvaṇa's boon requires that Rāma bleed and suffer to the extent described in the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*. Here, too, the commentators offer various explanations. Govindarāja (*ad* 6.35.9), while deferring, as it were, to Pollock's argument as one reason for Rāma's apparent suffering, also notes that if Rāma did not exhibit such signs of mortality the common people would realize that he was not a man but in fact God and, consequently, the dharmic behavior he has come to exemplify would be impossible for them to emulate. This, he suggests, is an esoteric explanation of Rāma's behavior. Finally, Govindarāja observes that by first succumbing to, and then escaping from, the bondage of Indrajit's serpent weapons, Rāma is providing for people a moral demonstration that calamities may come and go swiftly. In other words, some commentators see Rāma as a deity who intentionally acts like a mere human not only for mythological reasons but also for pastoral purposes in order to serve as an example of stoic endurance of *la condition humaine*.[6] Finally, let me turn to the substratal historical reading that in a way governs or influences the preceding levels of interpretation.

Much of the project of the commentators and their modern-day equivalents in the lay community is driven directly by their concern to show that the events narrated in the poem actually took place as described. This, no doubt, lies behind the commentators' virtual obsession with the chronology of the epic tale. The scholiasts fall basically into two opposing groups on this matter. But both sides are insistent in telling their audiences the exact month, day, and even hour at which the hero took certain actions or experienced certain setbacks, at which a specific battle took place or a demonic warrior was slain, and so on.

Then too, the commentators strongly defend the veracity of Vālmīki as against that of the authors of other well-known ancient versions of the Rāma story such as those found in the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas. For example, the commentators Nāgeśa and Satyatīrtha, who are otherwise rarely in agreement, note that Vālmīki's description of the elaborate cremation ceremony given Rāvaṇa (in the Vulgate version) would appear to be incompatible with the episode in the *Mahābhārata*'s version of the Rāma story, known as the *Rāmopākhyāna* (3.274.31),where it is said that Rāma's *brahmāstra* weapon had vaporized the *rākṣasa* lord's body.[7] Nāgeśa (*ad* 6.99.42) rationalizes the seeming contradiction by arguing that the *Mahābhārata* passage is merely an example of hyperbole used to express the extraordinary blazing energy of Rāma's arrow (*rāmabāṇatejovarṇanaviṣaye 'tyuktyalaṅkāraparatvād iti vadanti*), while, by implication, Vālmīki's account is strictly factual. In other words, the commentator regards the *Rāmāyaṇa*, at least in this instance, as a more historical text than the more literary (!) *Mahābhārata*.

Perhaps even more interesting is the way in which Govindarāja (*ad* 6.111.12), as part of a wider commentarial disputation occasioned by Rāma's failure to mention to Sītā anything about the famous holy place (*tīrtha*) of Rāmeśvara as the reunited couple fly over the southern tip of India, refutes the arguments of those commentators who cite *purāṇic* sources for the establishment of the *tīrtha*. He argues that although the Purāṇas may deal effectively with such great cosmological events as the creation and destruction of the universe, they are poor sources for the reconstruction of actual history, an area in which the epics themselves are far more reliable. He thus argues that one must give credence to the account recorded in the *Rāmāyaṇa* over any found in the *Purāṇas,* especially when one takes into account the fact that Vālmīki is a Vedic seer (*ṛṣi*) who has, moreover, a boon of omniscient authorial vision from Brahmā.[8]

One could multiply examples in all of these areas. The point, however, is, I think, clear. Since the text lies so close to the aesthetic, sociopolitical, and theological heart of the traditional culture, the commentators, no matter how frequently and violently they may disagree with one another on critical issues in these domains, feel it powerfully incumbent on them to argue forcefully for the historicity of every element and passage of the poem that they accept as textually genuine.

In order to make this kind of argument, they bring to their aid their considerable learning in virtually all of the major and many of the minor *śāstras*, including grammar (*vyākaraṇa*), literary theory (*sāhitya*), *dharma*, policy (*nīti*), the various philosophical systems (*darśanas*), medicine

(*āyurveda*), palmistry (*sāmudrika*), astronomy (*jyotiṣa*), the science of omens (*nimittaśāstra*), military science (*dhanurveda*), cookery (*pākaśāstra*), and more. In short, in their deep commitment to the work in all of its aspects they deploy the entire range of knowledge systems at the disposal of elite educated "public intellectuals" of what Pollock has so aptly termed "the Sanskrit ecumene."

An examination of the prominence of various elements of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in public discourse in India today and of the continuing concern with and reinterpretation of its narrative and characters in literature, film, TV, feminist discourse, politics, social relations, and religion suggests that the story continues to exert its fascination on people of all persuasions and continues to function as a sort of cultural palimpsest on which many actors can inscribe their own readings afresh.

Just as in the age of the poem's medieval commentators, readers of today continue to deploy contemporary scientific disciplines and technologies in aid of validating features of the epic tale. One may consider, for example, the Internet buzz of the past few years over satellite photography from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration that was widely circulated around the Indian diaspora as evidence that the submarine geological formation sometimes known as Adam's Bridge had been confirmed by the technologies of the space age to be the remnants of the well-known *setu*, or causeway, said in the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* to have been constructed by Rāma's monkey army under the direction of the simian civil engineer Nala. Western science, the argument went, had clearly shown that the formation could not be a natural one. I received copies of this email from a number of very highly educated friends and colleagues.

This matter has now once again erupted into the political sphere in the form of the current controversy surrounding the Government of India's plan to deepen the shipping channel between India and Sri Lanka, the so-called "*setusamudram*" conflict in which the representatives of state and mercantile interests at the Centre and in the state of Tamil Nadu have been challenged by forces of the religious right who claim that the formation to be removed by dredging is precisely the *setu*, which structure they have charged with a sacral quality. The dispute set off dramatic and disruptive demonstrations across northern India and was exacerbated by a now withdrawn report of the Archaeological Survey of India, which argued that there was no evidence for the construction of such a bridge other than the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself. Once again, the response is that the poem is, in fact, an unimpeachable historical record.

Consider, too, the attack a few years back on the chair of the Delhi University History Department by representatives of the Bharatiya Janata Party-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad student party who were motivated by anger over the inclusion in a departmental reader of a paper by the late A. K. Ramanujan on the multiplicity of *Rāmāyaṇa* versions.

The point of noting this, not to mention the countless references to the epics that appear in the daily newspapers, popular writing, and political speeches, is that a passionately engaged and generally well-informed receptive history of the *Rāmāyaṇa,* as well as the *Mahābhārata,* has continued from antiquity right down to the present day in a way for which it is difficult to find parallels in other literary traditions. In short, criticism and commentary on this immortal work is still very much alive in a broad, diverse, and finally democratic worldwide interpretive community in which, it seems, everyone is an expert.

Notes

[1] The commentators to whom I will be referring are writing roughly from the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries. For a discussion of the available commentaries and their possible dates, see Bhatt 1964: 350—61; and Lefeber 1994: 17—28.

[2] Pollock argues, provocatively, in his magisterial study of the Sanskrit ecumene, that the poem's references to its own oral beginnings are mere nostalgia composed from the perspective of a literary culture familiar with if not absolutely grounded in writing. This indeed may be true insofar as the formal contrivance of the framing narrative about the poem's composition and original transmission as recorded in the epic's opening passage goes. But that section is clearly a later addition to the poem. The actual early stages of the poem appear to have been grounded in orality. For Pollock's brief argument on this point, see Pollock 2006: 78–79.

[3] All *Rāmāyaṇa* references are to the Baroda (Oriental Institute of Baroda) critical edition, *The Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa: Critical Edition* (1960–75). References to our translation and notes are to our annotated translation, *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India*, cited by individual volume under the translators in the References).

[4] See, for example, Kataka Mādhava Yogīndra's comments on verses 6.75.32 and 1669* of the critical edition (corresponding to the two verses starting with 6.88.36b of the "Vulgate"). Kataka Mādhava Yogīndra not only omits these two verses but criticizes them as redundant and interpolated. He notes that they serve to introduce an improper chapter break. He claims that the division of chapters here, which some manuscripts follow, is incorrect because there is no change of topic, as the battle between Lakṣmaṇa and Indrajit simply continues. (*atra madhye punaruktaṃ ślokadvayaṃ prakṣipya sargam avacchindanti. puraḥ paścād ubhayos tumulaṃ yuddham eva kevalaṃ vartate na kiṃcid arthāntaraṃ prakaraṇāntaram. ato 'yukto 'vacchedaḥ.*) Nāgeśa accepts Kataka Mādhava Yogīndra's position and paraphrases his comments, while Satyatīrtha notes that this is merely one textual tradition (*saṃpradāyaḥ*). Such textual issues constitute a matter of dispute between commentators aligned with Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa and Kataka Mādhava Yogīndra, on the one hand, and those aligned with Varadarāja Udāḷi, Govindarāja, and Maheśvaratīrtha on the other. The latter, for example, unanimously mark a chapter boundary after the critical edition's verse 1669*.

[5] On the question of Rāma's lack of self-consciousness of his own divinity, see the essay by Bronner in this volume.

[6] *rāvaṇasya manuṣyaikavadhyatvena tadbhāvanety apy āhuḥ. sarvātmanā manuṣyabhāvanānanurodhe jana evaṃ manyeta nāyaṃ martyaḥ kiṃ tu devas tena tadvad asmākaṃ na śakyam anuṣṭhātuṃ dharmān iti. sarvathā manuṣyabhāvanāyāṃ tu mahājanānuṣṭhānadarśanena svayam anuṣṭhāsyati loka iti rahasyam. nāgapāśabaddhatayāvasthānaṃ tu dharmaniratānām api kadācid āpad upatiṣṭhati nivartate ca jhaṭitīti lokānāṃ pradarśanāyeti. evaṃ mohādiṣv api draṣṭavyam.*

[7] *Mahābhārata* references are to the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute's critical edition, *Mahābhārata: Critical Edition* (1933–70).

[8] *na tv atra rudro mahādevaḥ. tena pūrvaṃ prāsādakaraṇānukteḥ . . . etādṛśapurāṇavacanānusareṇāyaṃ śloko liṅgapratiṣṭhāṃ bodhayatīti. maivam uktadoṣavistārāt. itihāso hi parigrahātiśayāt. granthasauṣṭhavāc ca. itihāsapurāṇaṃ pañcamam ityādāv adhikākṣaratve 'pi pūrvaprayogenābhyarhitatvāc ca purāṇebhyo garīyān iti. vedaḥ prācetasād āsīd iti vedamayatoktyā caturmukhavarapradānamūlatayā ca prabalataraḥ. tadvirodhe tāmasapurāṇavacanāni na pramāṇāni. kiṃ ca purāṇaṃ sargapratisargādiṣv anyaparam iti netihāsavat purāvṛttakathane tātparyavat.*

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PART TWO

Kāvya: Sanskrit Literary Culture in History

4

The Prose *Varṇaka* in the *Lalitavistara*

Xi He

Sheldon Pollock's insistence on studying Sanskrit literary culture "from the inside out" and his argument for the important role that early Buddhist texts played in the history of Sanskrit literature are two of his many contributions to Sanskrit's literary history.[1] His way of studying the literary culture from the inside out—listening to what the texts say and what the people who wrote and read the texts say about them—has changed the study of Sanskrit literature and supplied a completely new methodology for checking the "pulse" of the texts and the tradition. Pollock's emphasis on the important role of early Buddhist texts is consequential not only for our exploration of the aesthetic and literary value of the Buddhist texts themselves but also for rethinking the history of Sanskrit literature as such. In particular, it raises forcibly the question of the Buddhist adoption of Sanskrit not only for the internal development of Buddhism, but as a major force shaping the later development of Indian literary culture, as the following study of the *Lalitavistara* will demonstrate.

The *Lalitavistara* (*the Extensive Play of the Bodhisattva*, hereafter LV) is a biography of the Buddha, generally dated to around the second century CE.[2] Regarded as one of the most sacred and important texts by Mahāyāna Buddhism and one of the Nine Dharmas of Nepalese Buddhism, the LV was widely distributed in Central, East, and Southeast Asia. Judging from the four Chinese translations and the single Tibetan translation (ca. 800 CE), it is clear that the text, which originated in South Asia, became very influential throughout the whole of Asia.[3] In addition, it was among the first important Buddhist Sanskrit texts known outside Asia, having been edited four times, translated into more than ten languages, and studied by many scholars since the nineteenth century. In general, prior scholarship on the LV has been concerned with its linguistic characteristics and textual development, its doctrinal relevance to Buddhism, and its significance to Buddhist art history.[4] These studies, without doubt, have greatly enhanced our understanding of the textual history of the LV and of the biographical process and doctrinal development of early Buddhism. However, scholarship so far has paid little

attention to the specific aesthetic characteristics of the LV as one of the early *kāvya* texts and ignored the ways in which this literary text narrates religious values and ideas.

As a matter of fact, the LV overflows with imagination, supplying the author not only with metaphorical and expressive language but also with creative plotting and structuring of the stories. Its artfulness of narration provides the means with which to visualize the whole story of the Buddha's striving for enlightenment as if witnessing a drama performed on stage. Moriz Winternitz, more than ninety years ago, realized that the LV, though "not yet an actual Buddha epic, contains all the germs of one such."[5] Yet never have the "germs" of the literariness and aesthetic characteristics in the LV been studied, despite the fact that expressive and aesthetic goals were clearly pursued in it. One of these germs is the inclusion in the text of various artistic descriptions in both prose and verse. In this essay, I will probe the various purposes of the long prose descriptions in the LV.

Locating Description in the Sanskrit Literary Tradition

Description (*varṇaka* or *varṇanā* in Sanskrit, *vaṇṇa* in Prakrit) etymologically comes from the noun *varṇa* (color). The verbal root *varṇ* means "to paint," "to color." A *varṇana* consists of a kind of ornamental verbal representation of various objects such as cities, forests, seasons, women, and kings. Originally it was probably linked to praise and gratitude since the earliest description appeared in the hymns of the *Ṛgveda* glorifying Uṣā, the Aśvins, and other gods and goddesses, as well as nature and natural phenomena. The famous description of personified cheerful frogs in the Frog-Hymn is a good example.[6] Similar descriptions exist in the Jaina scriptures (*āgamas*), written in Prakrit several centuries before the common era, in which kings, temples, sages, and the heavens are frequently described.[7] Description is also an important technique in Pali literature and the two epics.[8] Description in these works is stylistically simple, prominently using simile (*upamā*) and metaphor (*rūpaka*).

However, some major change occurred in prose description during the first two centuries of the common era. The inscriptions of Puḷumāyi II at Nāsikā in Prakrit and of Rudradāman at Girinagara in Sanskrit are characterized by descriptive compounds and sentences that are longer than earlier seen. Both inscriptions were written around 150 CE. The Rudradāman inscription, overflowing with compounds and long sentences rather than simple, shorter phrases, praises the restoration of the dam of Lake Sudarśana (Lake Beautiful) by the Kṣatrapa King, whose virtues and qualities are described in intricate

detail.[9] The long sentences are comprised of numerous compounds. The longest compound contains as many as fifteen words.[10] The style of the descriptions is in general plain, though adorned with figures of sound (*śabdālaṃkāra*) and occasionally with similes, the figure of speech based on sense (*arthālaṃkāra*). The use of longer compounds is itself a distinct departure from epic style, as A. B. Keith pointed out many years ago.[11] In addition, the use of long sentences and long compounds in description becomes an important feature of later prose, reaching its climax in the works of Bāṇa, which abounds with figures of speech in both sound and meaning.[12]

Description later develops into an important literary mode in *kāvya* literature written in both prose and verse. We see this first in cosmopolitan languages such as Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Apabhraṃśa and later in the regional languages of northern India, especially Rajasthani and Gujarati, wherein it becomes a separate genre that is named *varṇa* or *varṇaka*.[13] Because of the limitations of meter, long sentences and long compounds are seldom seen in verse. We must keep in mind that not all descriptions in prose use long compounds and sentences and not all descriptions in verses are flowery with figures of speech. For example, the prose descriptions by Subandhu (sixth century CE) in his *Vāsavadattā* create sophisticated bitextual blocks through the interweaving of figurative, semantic, and syntactic elements.[14] By contrast, those of Āryaśūra (fourth century CE) in his *Jātakamālā* (Garland of Birth Stories) are plain and straightforward. Likewise, the verse descriptions by Kālidāsa (fourth century CE) in his *Meghadūta* (The Cloud Messenger) are intricate and replete with ornaments, while those in his dramas are much simpler. Thus we see that there is a growing tendency in *kāvya* for elaboration and complexity.

Indeed, as Pollock points out, "what makes *kāvya* different from everything else has essentially to do with language itself."[15] To mark this distinction (*viśeṣa*), the *kavi* (poet) aims to create stylistic effects by applying meter, figures of speech, detailed description, and other devices on the linguistic and semantic plane. Very often a successful description applies figures of speech and other literary methods simultaneously. Phonological, syntactic, and semantic elements interact to construct a description. By relating various circumstances and conditions, description serves to communicate the theme of the text and to cultivate aesthetic emotion (*rasa*), considered by Sanskrit literary theorists to be the very life of *kāvya*. Therefore, description is an important tool in the making of *kāvya*.

Since it was one of the main compositional methods for *kāvya*, the theorization of description emerged immediately when Sanskrit literary

theorists began to explore the nature of the literary. Although around the beginning of the common era Bharata develops the theory of *rasa* in his discussion of dramatic composition in his *Nāṭyaśāstra* (The Science of Dramaturgy), theorization on the nature of Sanskrit *kāvya* does not begin in earnest until Bhāmaha (seventh century CE) and Daṇḍin (between the seventh and eighth centuries). Both literary theorists recognized that description is one of the major components of great poems, or *mahākāvyas*. For the first time in the history of Sanskrit poetics, Daṇḍin explicitly provides a detailed list of objects that should be described in a *mahākāvya*. This list ranges from natural phenomena such as oceans, mountains, the rising of the moon and the sun, and the garden to social and political orders such as cities, water sports, drinking, lovemaking, love festivals, the separation of lovers, marriage, the birth of a prince, ministers, embassies, military expeditions, battles, and the achievements of a hero.[16] Moreover, Daṇḍin discusses the description of exalted objects or characters both figuratively, as an *alaṃkāra* (ornament, figures of speech) and as a "quality" (*guṇa)* of the composition. Thus he defines *udātta* (exalted) as an *alaṃkāra* that entails the greatness and supermundaneness of prosperity or character,[17] and *udāra* (exalted) as the one of the ten *guṇas* that suggests noble and lofty qualities of the person or object described. No matter which of the two modes of expression appears in the text, this kind of description purports to reflect the grandeur and sublimity of the character by means of exalted diction. Daṇḍin also suggests that the quality of *ojas* (elaborate style), another *guṇa* that is typified by many compounds, is the life of prose.[18] Associating different *guṇas* with particular regions, Daṇḍin differentiates two regional styles or "ways" (*mārga*) of *kāvya*: *vaidarbhī* (the style associated with Vidarbha, or Berar) and *gauḍī* (the style associated with Bengal); he strongly prefers *vaidarbhī* over *gauḍī*. The *vaidarbhī* demands few or no compounds and is endowed with all ten *guṇas*, but *gauḍī* is characterized by long compounds and alliteration and contains only two *guṇas*: *ojas* and *kānti* (beauty). Vāmana developed the *mārga* theory into the systematic study of *rīti*, which for him is the "soul of poetry" (*ātmā kāvyasya*), and he defines as the "special arrangement of words" (*viśiṣṭā padaracanā*) in connection with *guṇas*.[19] It is possible that these modes of poetic expression were popular in certain localities long before their theorization. While *gauḍī* is often disparaged as "verbal bombast" (*akṣaraḍambara*),[20] it is through descriptions in this style that Bāṇa ascends the peak of Sanskrit prose *kāvya*.

Certainly, description is an important tool that the poets of the *mahākāvyas* used to explore the nature and power of language and to display their mastery of language because the plots of most *mahākāvyas* are borrowed from stories

in epics that are familiar to most people and "*kāvya* is not something read for plot."[21] Description had already exerted great force and charm in the two Buddhist *mahākāvyas of* Aśvaghoṣa (ca. first century CE), the *Buddhacarita* (Acts of the Buddha) and the *Saundarananda* (Handsome Nanda); and three of the five most celebrated Brahmanical *mahākāvyas*, the *Kumārasambhava* (The Origin of the Prince Kumāra), the *Raghuvaṃśa* (The Lineage of Raghu) by Kālidāsa, and the *Kirātārjunīya* (Arjuna and the Hunter) by Bhāravi (sixth century CE), all of which predated the theories of Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin.[22]

The problem here is that even though Daṇḍin recognizes three kinds of *kāvya*: prose, verse and mixed, he only discusses the importance of description for *mahākāvya*, one of the subgenres of stanzaic verse. As Indira Peterson suggests, although Sanskrit literary theorists played an important role in shaping and responding to literary practice, the "fit" between particular genres and the theoretical approaches is not always satisfactory.[23] Indeed, Daṇḍin did not discuss the importance of description in prose and mixed *kāvya*. Both King Bhoja (eleventh century CE) and the commentator on his *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* (Necklace of Sarasvatī, Goddess of Language), Ratneśvara, claimed that certain poets excel in a certain writing medium (verse, prose, or the mixed style of verse and prose) and some themes work better in certain media. For example, Ratneśvara argues that a description of a forest is beautiful only in prose,[24] although this is not necessarily the case. In fact, appropriate descriptions are equally important components of verse, prose, and mixed works. There are only a few prose and mixed *kāvya* works prior to Daṇḍin's time available to us, yet it is obvious that description is a significant characteristic of such extant works as the Rudradāman inscription, the Buddhist mixed *kāvya* of Āryaśūra, the *Jātakamālā*, Subandhu's *Vāsavadattā*, and the LV, which the Sanskrit literary critical tradition does not include. The prose descriptions in the LV in many cases expand the intricacy and length of those in the Rudradāman inscription and the *Jātakamālā*. Although it is unlikely that we could obtain any hard evidence that the LV exerted influence on later Puranic works or Bāṇa's prose works, the similarity in nature of descriptions in these works urges us to reconsider what role Sanskrit Buddhist prose literature has played in the history of Sanskrit literature.

The Play of Syntax and Semantics

The following discussion will focus on the many artistic prose descriptions in the LV. Particularly important are the vivid descriptions of the Bodhisattva (the Buddha to be), his mother Māyādevī, his wife Gopā, his throne and his palace, the women in the palace, the sorrow of Gopā and the women in the

palace following the departure of the Bodhisattva, and the war between the Bodhisattva and Māra. Sometimes the same object is described in different forms, and the length of the descriptions also varies. These lively descriptions are adorned predominately with sense-based figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, and hyperbole (*atiśaya*), while the sound-based figure of speech alliteration (*anuprāsa*) is also consciously applied. The most distinctive descriptions in the text are found in long prose sentences.

The prose *varṇaka*s in the LV can be divided roughly into two general types, depending on whether they describe beings or objects. The *varṇaka*s depicting divine or human actors and actions are usually longer and more florid and use more varieties of figures of speech than the *varṇaka*s depicting objects. Using locative absolute or genitive absolute structures, with the main verb at the end, some long sentences are comprised of many long compounds that are often constructed of more than ten words. Some of the longer descriptive sentences, which flow with abundant figures of speech, extend up to three pages. The longest *varṇaka* in the LV is the description of a *bodhisattva* named Śvetaketu,"the one bearing the white banner," in the Tuṣita heaven before he descends to the human world for his last rebirth. The sentence that runs three pages according to the Hokazono version describes and praises the countless virtues and powerful qualities of the Bodhisattva. Except for several independent words, the description consists solely of compounds, in fact mostly long compounds, strung together by a genitive absolute structure. The main verb does not appear until the end of the sentence. The author makes free use of the possibility in prose to construct long compounds, the longest of which is composed of twenty-one words, but they are in the main not difficult to comprehend.

Within this longest sentence in the text, alliteration and pun are used in an uncomplicated manner, but certainly we can perceive that the author applies them consciously. Also used extensively are simile and metaphor, two of the four figures of speech that Bharata discusses in his *Nāṭyaśāstra*. These latter two, and especially simile, are also the figures of speech that appear most frequently in many of the important texts composed before the LV, from the epics to the great works of Pali literature. It is the metaphors in this description of the Bodhisattva, though, that draw our closest attention. In addition to many other simple metaphors, six full-blown metaphors are used in sequence in long compounds. This kind of metaphor is called *samastavastuviṣayarūpaka* (a metaphor in which the full set of equations is spelled out) by the later Sanskrit literary theorist Bhāmaha in his *Kāvyālaṅkāra* (Ornament of Kāvya).[25] In these six metaphors, the Bodhisattva is identified with a captain of a ship, a

leader in battle, a lotus, a lion, the sun, and the moon. Due to the excellence of the metaphor's tenor (*upameya*), namely, the Bodhisattva, and of its vehicle (*upamāna*), such as a captain of a ship, all aspects of their excellent qualities are identified. Therefore, when the Bodhisattva is identified with a lotus, this is no superficial identification. Rather, he *is* a lotus, in every part and aspect.

> *bodhicittamūlamahākaruṇādaṇḍādhyāśayodgatasya gambhīravī-ryadharmasalilābhiṣyanditasya upāyakauśalakarṇikasya bodhyaṅgadhyānakeśarasya samādhikiñjalkasya guṇagaṇavimalasarasisujātasya vigatamadamānaparidāhaśaśivimal-avistīrṇapattrasya śīlaśrutāpramādadaśadigapratihatagandhino loke jñānavṛddhasyāṣṭābhir lokadharmair anupaliptasya mahāpuruṣapadmasya puṇyajñānasaṃbhāravisṛtasurabhigandhinaḥ prajñājñānadinakarakiraṇair vikasitasuviśuddhaśatapattrapadmanayanasya*[26]

> Arising from determination that has the enlightened mind as its root and great compassion as its stem, sprinkled by the water of profound heroic energy, skillful means is his pericarp, meditation is his stamen, and profound meditation is his filament; rising from the pure lake of countless qualities, free from the inundation of pride and arrogance, his broad leaves spread out, unblemished as the moon; the fragrance of morality, revelation, serenity of disposition (spread out) unobstructed into ten directions of space; learned in knowledge in the world, yet unstained by the eight worldly *dharmas*, the *bodhisattva* is the lotus of great men; the sweet fragrance of merits and the accumulation of wisdom wafts forth; the sun's rays of wisdom and knowledge shine upon the blossomed pure hundred-petaled lotus.

This vivid description unfolds as a still portrait of a charming lotus rising from the pure lake of countless qualities, each part of the flower emphasized in great detail with broad brushstrokes. The focus moves from the root upward, following the stem toward the pericarp, stamen, and filament, then from the leaves and fragrance to the whole blossoming hundred-petaled lotus. As the focus shifts, each part comprising this great lotus among men is displayed and is marvelous.

Syntactically, as part of the long *varṇaka* in a single, vast sentence using genitive absolute structure, this metaphor applies numerous compounds combined with past passive participles. These compounds are not difficult to understand if we keep in mind the different components of the lotus as a thread tying the passage together and the unchanging word order within in each compound, starting with the traits of the Bodhisattva and ending with those of a lotus. Similarly, in each of the other five metaphors, the excellent qualities of the Bodhisattva are matched with the different parts of each object.

Indeed, what these metaphors present is not merely depictions in words but six pictures in color and motion.

What is unique about these metaphors is not the novelty of the objects with which the Bodhisattva is identified, nor even the compounding technique itself, but the semantic density and linguistic sophistication in compound after compound. Consider, to examine one more example, the amazingly detailed identification of the Bodhisattva with the physique and lifestyle of a lion. First we find a sketch of the physical features of this lion: his feet skilled in swift running, his sharp teeth and claws, his canines, head, mane, yawning mouth, and two beautiful and pure eyes. Then his physical surroundings and lifestyle are described. Dwelling in mountains and caves, this monarch of the forest treads four paths in a forest of well-grown trees. He has unwavering courage. Uttering loud roars, he tames the herds of deer and beasts. In correspondence with all the characteristics of this great lion, the full-blown and lifelike image of the Bodhisattva is displayed: his personality, virtues, powers, and behavior, which naturally leads the imagination of the reader to a picture of the multidimensional Bodhisattva.[27]

The second type of *varṇaka*, which describes objects such as thrones and palaces, usually appears in the text with a long list of things at its start, sometimes with an adjective as the very first word, and ends with a past passive participle. It is very possible that this kind of *varṇaka* already existed in the earliest version of the LV because the translation of such descriptions in a Chinese text from the early fourth century resembles that in a seventh-century Chinese translation.[28] Its ornamental effect is expressed through simple but long compounds that are rich in alliteration but contain no figures of speech. The following passage, which consists of compounds in the locative absolute, describes the palace of the Bodhisattva in Tuṣita in great detail.

> *dvātriṃśadbhūmisahasrapratisaṃsthite vitardiniryūhatoraṇagavākṣaharmya-kūṭāgāraprāsādatsamalaṃkṛte ucchritachattradhvajapatākaratnakiṅkiṇījālav-itānavitate māndāravamahāmāndāravapuṣpasaṃstaraṇasaṃstṛte apsarasaḥ-koṭīniyutaśatasahasrasaṃgītisaṃpracalite atimuktakacampakapāṭalakovidār-amucilindamahāmucilindāśokanyagrodhatindukāsanakarṇikārakeśarasālam-ahāratnavṛkṣopaśobhite hemajālasaṃchanne mahatāpūrṇakumbhopaśobhite samatalavyūhopaśobhite jyotirmālikāsumanovārṣikītaraṇivaligotaraṇisugan-dhikadhanuskaridevasumanotpalapadmakumudapuṇḍarīkasaugandhikama-hāpuṣpavitānavitatapradeśe pattraguptaśukasārikakokilahaṃsamayūracakr-avākakunālakalaviṅkajīvaṃjīvakādinānāvidhadvijagaṇamadhuranirghoṣan-ikūjite devakoṭīniyutaśatasahasrābhimukhanayanāvalokitollokite mahāvipul-adharmasaṃgītisarvakāmarativegakleśacchedane vyapagatakhilakrodhaprat-*

ighamānamadadarpāpanayane prītiprasādaprāmodyottaptavipulasmṛtisaṃj-anane [29]

The Bodhisattva's palace is seated among these of the thirty-two thousand gods; it is decorated with terraces, porticos, and gabled pavilions; within the palace are trellises adorned with jeweled bells, parasols, and flags floating unfurled; the blossoms of the *māndārava* and the great *māndārava* coral tree are scattered around; the palace echoes with the songs of hundreds of thousands of nymphs; it shines with a myriad of great trees such as *atimuktaka, campaka, pāṭala, kovidāra, mucilinda, mahāmucilinda, aśoka, nyagrodha, tinduka, asana, karṇikāra, keśara, sāla,* and great jeweled trees; within the palace are level fields glistening with golden trellises and great pitchers full of water; great flowers such as *jyotir, mālikā, sumano, vārṣikī, taraṇi, vali, gotaraṇi, sugandhika, dhanuskari, devasumanā,* lotuses—blue, kumuda and white—and *saugandhika* spread out; all kinds of birds call out sweet sounds—*pattragupta,* parrots, *sārika,* cuckoos, swans, peacocks, *cakravāka, kunāla, kalaviṅka, jīvaṃjīvaka*; the palace is always right in front of the eyes of hundreds thousands of gods; all desires, passions and defilements are destroyed, all anger, rage, pride, haughtiness, and arrogance are dispelled by the resounding in this palace of the songs of the great Dharma; and joy, serenity, delight, stimulation, and extensive mindfulness arise.

The compounds in this description list a series of ornaments, jewels, trees, flowers, and birds, all of which, in the Indian context, symbolize nobility, auspiciousness, and exaltation. These qualities belong not only to the palace but ultimately also to the Bodhisattva, the person who dwells in it. Similar description occurs several times in the LV, and each time the author elaborately presents propitious objects in the natural world to extol the most sublime and lofty character in the human world—the Bodhisattva.

In earlier Pali literature such as in the *Kuṇālajātaka* (The Birth Story of the Bird Kuṇāla), we can find long prose descriptions also. We do not know the exact date of this work, but it is very likely that it was in existence as early as in the first century BCE, when the Pali Canon was first written down.[30] Comparing the descriptions in the *Kuṇālajātaka* and the LV, we notice that the authors of both are fond of using locative absolute or genitive absolute structures that consist of many long compounds listing things, as well as using a numerous past passive participles. Here is the first description in the *Kuṇālajātaka* describing the area where the bird named Kuṇāla lives.

sabbosadhadharaṇidhare nekapupphamālyavitate gajagavajamahisar-urucamarapasadakhaggagokaṇṇavyagghadīpiacchataracchauddārakāk-adalimigabiḷārasasakaṇṇikānucarite ākiṇṇanelamaṇḍalamahāvarāhe

nāgakulakaṇerusaṅghādhivutthe issamigasākhamigasarabhamiga eṇimigavātamigapasadamiga purisallukimpurisayakkharakkhasanisevite am-ajjamañjaridharabrahaṭṭhapupphapupphitagganekapādapagaṇavitate kurara-cakoravāraṇamayūraparabhutajīvañjīvakacelāvakabhiṅkārakaravīkamattavi-haṅgasatasampaghuṭṭhe añjanamanasilaharitālahiṅgulakahemarajatakañca-naanekadhātūsatavinaddhapaṭimaṇḍitappadese[31]

The earth bears all sorts of herbs and is covered with various flowers; elephants, *gayals*, buffaloes, antelopes, yaks, spotted deer, rhinoceros, *gokaṇṇa* deer, lions, tigers, panthers, bears, wolves, hyenas, *uddārakas*, *kadali* antelopes, wild cats, hares, and rabbits roam around; it is inhabited by herds of wild boars, adult elephants, and young elephants, *issa* antelopes, monkeys, *sarabha* deer, *eṇi* deer, *vāta* deer and spotted deer, ghosts such as *purisallus, kimpurisas, yakkhas,* and *rakkhasas*; multitudes of trees spread out full of buds, sprouts, and fully developed blossoms; the sounds of hundreds of overjoyed birds resound: ospreys, cakoras, *hatthilinga* birds, peacocks, pheasants, *celāvaka* birds, *bhiṇkāra* birds, and *karavīka* cuckoos; this area is decorated with hundreds of minerals: collyrium, arsenic, yellow orpiment, vermilion, hema gold, silver, and *kanaka* gold.

In this description the longest compound has twenty words. It is rich in alliteration. The sequence in which the words appear in each compound is quite similar to the Sanskrit descriptions quoted above, that is, a list of objects ending with a past passive participle. Obviously, these kinds of descriptions are more linguistically complicated and semantically sophisticated than descriptions in the epics, which are more akin to simple lists or catalogs. Still, on close comparison, there is a subtle difference between the Sanskrit and Pali descriptions. In early Pali prose, description seems closer to everyday language, as Warder suggests.[32] The lists in the compounds of the description in Sanskrit seem to have been chosen carefully rather than somewhat randomly compiled into lists, as in the Pali text. Moreover, in the LV, the names of the trees, flowers, and birds are symbols of loftiness and auspiciousness, which contextualize appropriately the character, theme, and emotion of the text as a whole.

It is very possible that the author of the LV was familiar with earlier Pali literature. Pali literature and Sanskrit literature are usually treated discretely by scholars, but their influence on each other in terms of meter, vocabulary, and syntax, among other elements, deserves our special attention. Some sections of prose in the *Mahābodhivaṃsa*, the earliest extant example of later Pali *kāvya* from perhaps the last quarter of the tenth century CE are composed of many long compounds and sentences. In the Pali Text Society's edition (2–

4)[33] a single sentence even stretches across two and a half pages. Its syntax is exactly the same as that found the Sanskrit examples I have already discussed: written in locative or genitive absolute structure, comprised of many past passive participles, and with the main verb at the end of the long sentence. Numerous Sanskritized words are used.[34] Therefore, we can see a pattern of mutual exchange between Sanskrit and Pali. Early *kāvya* was influenced by even earlier Pali literature, and in turn later Pali literature was influenced by full-fledged *kāvya*.

The Buddhist Literary Enterprise

What is the significance of the author self-consciously using long ornamental descriptions in the LV, the biography of the Buddha, one of the few early works available to us in Sanskrit? Perhaps another important question is why the author chooses to use Sanskrit at all? And further, what is the relevance of these descriptions to the text? Answers to these questions are necessary if we are to gain a better understanding of this text and the significance of the LV to the history of Sanskrit literary culture and the history of Buddhism. While it is not possible to answer all these questions in detail in this essay, I will attempt to explain the Buddhist literary milieu in which the LV was produced.

As Étienne Lamotte (1988) and Louis Renou (1956) point out, the creators of works in mixed Sanskrit such as the LV acted as authors instead of translators or adapters.[35] Writing in mixed Sanskrit did not signify either their poor education or their inability to produce correct Sanskrit. On the contrary, they dealt with this literary language often with a dexterity that left the amount of Prakrit and Sanskrit to their personal judgment.[36] It is clear that in these prose descriptions the author of the LV chose to use Sanskrit that is very close to Pāṇinian grammar. Moreover, these descriptions are much more linguistically and semantically sophisticated than those in either the Jaina works or Pali literature from several centuries earlier.

According to interpretations of extant inscriptions, archaeological evidence, and citations in literature, the history of what came to be called *kāvya* is unlikely to have predated the second century BCE. Buddhists in the first several centuries of the common era were seriously involved in the development of *kāvya*.[37] Works such as Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* in the second century, Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*, and Mātṛceṭa's various poems, dated to the third and fourth centuries, respectively, are products of this effort. However, except for Aśvaghoṣa's works and *Jātakamālā*, which have been studied by a few scholars, other Buddhist works are barely considered in the

study of the history of Sanskrit literature. Similarly, the Sanskrit tradition of literary theory largely ignores Aśvaghoṣa's works, the *Jātakamālā*, and most other Buddhist texts.

As Pollock suggests, the choice by Buddhists to use Sanskrit as the compositional language for poems about the lives of the Buddha has far more to do with the aesthetics of religious experience and "the expressive qualities of register than the restrictions of religion."[38] Buddhists certainly had clear ideas about what to express in words and how to do it, and they also had a certain readership in mind. In his *Mahāprajñāpāramitaśāstra* (Exposition of the Perfection of Great Wisdom), Nāgarjuna emphasizes the literariness of *avadāna* (stories of the deeds of previous saints), which, according to him, also includes the *Bodhisattvāvadāna*, a genre containing the life stories of the Bodhisattva. He says that such stories must be "worldly, have the qualities of tenderness, and not be difficult to comprehend."[39] Yijing (I-tsing, 義淨), in his travelogue *Nanhai ji gui nei fa zhuan* (Account of Buddhism Sent from the South Seas南海寄歸內法傳), describes in detail the singing of hymns as one part of the worship practiced daily by the Mūlasarvāstivādin monks. He notes that Indian Buddhist monks are taught to recite Mātṛceṭa's hymns after they have memorized the precepts, no matter to which philosophical sect they belong. He highly praises Mātṛceṭa's compositions as "graceful in both words and emotions, equal in virtue to the heavenly flowers, and the high principles that they contain rival the high mountains."[40] He also praises the writings of Nāgarjuna and Aśvaghoṣa as replete with literary embellishment and so pleasant for readers as to make them forget their fatigue. He attests that the purpose of composing birth stories in verse is to teach the doctrine of universal salvation in a beautiful style, agreeable to the popular mind while being attractive to readers.[41]

Although disagreement continues regarding the reasons Buddhists turned to Sanskrit to transmit the Buddha's words after their rejection of this language for half a millennium, it is undeniable that Buddhists began to write in Sanskrit, though initially in mixed Sanskrit, around the second century CE. We should also note that mixed Sanskrit is not merely a Buddhist phenomenon but also part of the cosmopolitan language. The LV is just another instance of Buddhist experimentation with Sanskrit literary expressivities at the time. Its prose descriptions rival the Kṣatrapa king Rudradāman inscription and the *Jātakamālā* in terms of linguistic sophistication and mastery in the composition of ornate *kāvya in* Sanskrit.

Suggesting the significance of the Rudradāman inscription, Pollock convincingly argues, "The Śakas' appropriation of Sanskrit for public political

purposes at the beginning of the Common Era is an event symptomatic or causative of a radical transformation in the historical sociology of Sanskrit. It is comparable in character and very possibly related to the Buddhist appropriation of Sanskrit after half a millennium of rejection." Further, he observes that "Śakas, Kuṣāṇas and the poets and intellectuals they patronized, often Buddhist poets and intellectuals, began to expand that economy by turning Sanskrit into an instrument of polity and the mastery of Sanskrit into a source of personal charisma."[42] Pollock's observations have great significance for the future study of Buddhist Sanskrit literature. This is not only because they provide the necessary historical background by pointing out the temporal and anti-Vedic parallelism between the Śakas' and the Buddhists' appropriation of Sanskrit but also because they direct our attention to the long neglected aesthetic and literary perspectives of Buddhist Sanskrit literature.

Indeed, it is precisely through the power of this kind of charisma and the aesthetics of Sanskrit that the works of Aśvaghoṣa, Mātṛceṭa, Kālidāsa, and Bāṇa spread throughout India and Asia, thereby creating a cosmopolitan readership that Pollock sketched in his Sanskrit cosmopolis theory.[43] The great Tibetan historian Tāranātha (sixteenth or seventeenth centuries CE) remarked that Mātṛceṭa's hymns were as powerful as the words of the Buddha in the spread of the *dharma*.[44] The LV was certainly a part of this cosmopolitan movement, attested to by the four Chinese translations and the Tibetan Translation. Blair notes that descriptions by great poets are such that a sculptor can use them and work after them, which must be one of the strongest and most decisive trials of the real merit of descriptions.[45] The *Jātakamālā* stories illustrated in Ajaṇṭā, the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra* (Entry into the Realm of Reality Sutra), and the 120 frames of bas-reliefs of the whole text of the LV ringing the ancient Borobudur temple in Java are testimonies to his words.

Conclusions

This essay discusses the ornamental prose descriptions in the LV in order to explore the various purposes of these descriptions in the text. As one of the canonical *mahāvaipulya* works, the text extensively describes the countless virtues and powers of the Bodhisattva through his miraculous acts in his life.[46] Not merely essential elements in the text, these descriptions elevate the prose to achieve the author's religious and aesthetic goals. Clearly, the author wants to emphasize the marvelous deeds of the Bodhisattva and evoke in the reader a sense of wonder and awe at the miraculous acts and exalted character of the Buddha. Simultaneously, the author uses descriptive long compounds and long

sentences in order to slow the narrative tempo, thus creating the conditions in which the readers' emotions may be awakened such that they delight in a feeling of wonder at witnessing the beauty of the extraordinary personality of the Bodhisattva. In the context of Sanskrit literary culture, such textual artistry is supported by a set of aesthetically and psychologically complicated theories of *rasa*, which is claimed to be the "soul" of *kāvya*.

The LV participated in the Buddhist literary enterprise in the first few centuries of the common era. As one of the early *kāvya* texts, its aesthetic characteristics are not only of great significance to the history of Sanskrit literature but also raise a fundamental question, that is, why has the aesthetic value of the LV—and similar Buddhist texts—long been ignored in the standard history of Sanskrit literature? This study of long prose descriptions in the LV should make clear its importance in understanding the early development *kāvya*, especially prose *kāvya*. It marks an important moment in the development of descriptive technique, one which looks back to the earlier prose style of the Pāli Jātaka stories, as well as forward toward the great masterpieces of later Sanskrit prose *kāvya*. I hope that this study will encourage further exploration of the LV and other early Buddhist poetic texts and their reintegration into the history of Sanskrit literature.

Notes

[1] See Pollock 2003: 1–130.

[2] The *LV* progressed through a number of developmental stages. Japanese scholars have done a lot of work on it in the past several decades. See Jong 1997–98. Hokazono (1994: 130) suggests that the original *LV* came into existence around 150 CE and the Sanskrit text of the LV between the sixth and seventh centuries.

[3] According to Bunyiu Nanjio (1883: 50–51), the four Chinese translations occurred in 221–63, 308, 420–79, and 683 CE. The first and third would have been unavailable in 730 CE. The extant two are *Fo shuo pu yao jing* (ca. 308 CE) and *Fang guangda zhuang yan jing* (683 CE).

[4] For example, for linguistic characteristics and textual development, refer to Oldenberg 1882; and Hokazono 1994. For doctrinal relevance, see Thomas 1940; and Okano1989. For its significance in Buddhist art history, see Pleyte 1901; and Krom 1926.

[5] Winternitz 1908–22, Vol. 2, 201.

[6] *Ṛgveda*, Book 7, 103.

[7] Jacobi (1885: 389–441) analyzes several hundred *varṇakas* in the Jaina canon.

[8] Ingalls 1968: 381–94. Ingalls indicates (392) that the author of the *Harivaṃśa* and the two epics, especially the *Mahābhārata*, use simple parataxis as a common poetic technique to build up descriptions in which ten or twenty names of trees in a forest, names of rivers and so on, are given the same inflectional ending and are usually connected by the conjunction particle *ca* (and). He says that classical *kāvya* have grown out of these epic descriptions, which began with instances of this oral technique of parataxis.

[9] See Pollock 1995: 88–90; 2006: 67–70. Pollock assigns great cultural-historical importance to this work. I discuss this importance in more detail below.

[10] Kielhorn 1905–6: 36–49.

[11] Keith 1953: 49.

[12] For the style of Bāṇa and the analysis of the long sentences in his works, see Hueckstedt 1985.

[13] *Encyclopedia of Indian Literature* 1992: 4505.

[14] Bronner (2010: 20–56) demonstrates how Subandhu uses long compounds in his alliterative blocks, which he interweaves with his bitextual ones.

[15] Pollock 2003: 46.

[16] *Kāvyādarśa*, 1.16–17: nagarārṇavaśailartucandrārkodayavarṇanaiḥ | udyānasalilakrīḍāmadhupānaratotsavaiḥ ‖16‖ vipralambhairvivāhaiśca kumārodayavarṇanaiḥ | mantradūtaprayāṇājināyakābhyudayairapi ‖ 17‖

[17] *Kāvyādarśa,* 2.300: āśāyasya vibhūtervā yanmahattvamanuttamam | udāttaṃ nāma taṃ prāhuralaṃkāraṃ manīṣiṇaḥ ||

[18] Ibid., 1.80 ojaḥ samāsabhūyastvam etad gadyasya jīvitam |

[19] *Kāvyālaṅkārasūtrāṇi,* 1.2.6–7.

[20] *Harṣacaritam,* chap. 1, verse 7.

[21] Pollock 2003: 44.

[22] The other two are *Śiśupālavadha* (The Slaying of the King Śiśupāla) of Māgha (eighth century) and *Naiṣadhīyacarita* (The Acts of the Naiṣadha King) of Śriharṣa (twelfth century).

[23] Peterson 1989: 285–86.

[24] *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* 1987: 150: yathā hi aṭavīvarṇanādau gadyam pragalbhate tathā na padyam.

[25] *Kāvyālaṅkāra,* 2.22.

[26] Hokazono 1994:282, 284. His book contributes a new edition of chapters 1 through 14 of the *LV*. For a portion of chapter 15, see Hokazono 1996–97.

[27] Hokazono 1994:284.

[28] See *Fo shuo pu yao jing,* vol. 1, T03, p0484a–b; and *Fang guangda zhuangyan jing,* vol. 1, T03, p0540b.

[29] Hokazono 1994:286, 288.

[30] Jacobi (1885: 389–441) considers this kind of prose description in long compounds that appeared in the Jaina literature as a sort of verse—veḍha (name of a meter, also called veṣṭaka)—saying that it is just the absence of a division into stanzas in a veḍha that makes it look like rhythmic prose. Later Alsdorf (1954) supports this view and finds more examples in texts such as the *Vasudevahiṇḍi*. Winternitz, however, disagrees and points out that even the earliest commentaries read these descriptions as ornate prose (Winternitz 1908–22, vol. 2, 305)and rightly so. The descriptions in the *Kuṇālajātaka* are usually treated as prose. The canonical character of these long descriptions is proved, as pointed out by Bollée in his preface to the text (*Kuṇālajātaka,* vi), by the fact that they are very different from that of the scholiast's prose written many centuries later; also they are commented on in the same way as the stanzas.

[31] *Kuṇālajātaka,* 8–9.

[32] Warder 2004, vol. 2, 256

[33] Mahābodhivaṃsa: 2-4.

[34] For a more detailed discussion of this text, see Collins 2003: 654–55.

[35] Mixed Sanskrit is a middle Indo-Aryan language, which more or less deviates from

classical Sanskrit codified by Pāṇīni (fourth century BCE). It is also called Buddhist Sanskrit or Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit (BHS). For more discussion of mixed Sanskrit, see Edgerton 1953.

[36] Lamotte 1988: 580; Renou 1956: 222.

[37] Pollock 2003: 69, 78, 85; 2006: 81.

[38] Pollock 2003: 24.

[39] abotuona zhe yu shi jian xiang si rou ruan qian yu. 阿波陀那者與世間相似柔軟淺語 Da Zang Jing No. 1509, Juan 33, T25, p0307b. Unfortunately, of this text only the Chinese translation survives. Étienne Lamotte translated in French and restored the first thirty chapters in Sanskrit from the Chinese version by Kumārajīva (404-405 A. D) in his Le Traité de grande vertu de sagesse de Nāgārjuna (*Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*), Louvain, Institut orientaliste, Bibliothèque de l'Université, 1966.

[40] si ke wei wen qing wan li, gong tian pa er qi fang, li zhi qing gao, yu di yue er zheng jun. 斯可謂文情婉麗。共天葩而齊芳。理致清高。與地岳而爭峻。Da Zang Jing No. 2125, Juan 4, T54, p0227b.

[41] Yu ling shun su yan mei du zhe huan'ai jiao she qun sheng er. 欲令順俗妍美讀者歡愛教攝群生耳。ibid.

[42] Both two quotes are from Pollock 2006: 72–73.

[43] Pollock 2006.

[44] *Dam pa'i chos rin po che 'Phags-pa'i yul du ji ltar dar ba i tshul gsal bar ston pa Dgos 'dod kun 'byuṅ źes bya ba bźugs so*, 86.

[45] Blair 1812: 161.

[46] *Vaipulya* is one of the twelve limbs (*aṅga*) according to some schools such as Sarvāstivādins and Mūlasarvāstivādins. It is equivalent to Vedalla, the ninth limb according to schools such as Theravādins. It derives from *vi* + √*pul*, which means "extensive, large, great." It is the elaborate explanation of the doctrines. As one of the important features of Mahāyāna texts, later the term *mahāvaipulya* is used to signify Mahāyāna. See Skilling 1997: 31–42.

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5

The Second *Mahābhārata*

Sudipta Kaviraj

This chapter is about reading the *Mahābhārata*, but it is also partly about the innate complexities of reading. Theories about aesthetics can be read in two ways: historically and theoretically. In one sense, it is more appropriate, while reading texts from the past, to treat them historically—in terms of the intellectual context in which they appeared—and, if the theory is a contribution to a tradition of theoretical debates, to look at the precise emendations and additions that one theory makes to the stock of concepts and arguments it had received from earlier ones. To follow that procedure, we should look at Abhinavagupta's views about the "manifestation of aesthetic emotion" (*rasaniṣpatti*) and compare them with preceding doctrines, against which he developed his own precise concepts and arguments. This will involve looking at earlier theorists' attempts to solve the problem of conceptual underdetermination in the crucial term *rasaniṣpatti*—by the concepts of irruption (*utpatti*), inference (*pratīti*), expression (*vyañjana*), or universalization (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*).[1] Such analysis will closely examine which concepts he rejects and on what grounds; which, like *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, he continues to use; and if he uses concepts in the same sense or not, or extends them, whether the exact arrangement in which he places them is the same or not. In other words, it would explore the conceptual structure in an Althusserian sense.[2] The other way is to deliberately abstract from the historical genealogies of concepts, arguments and theories and to compare them, without regard to historical specificity, with other theories that might have a structural, not family, resemblance to them. This essay offers an exercise of the second, more structural kind.

The *Mahābhārata* is a text that inevitably produces bafflement at various levels, by its very scale. All kinds of usual activity regarding a text—writing, reading, understanding—are exceeded by its scale, both by its simple extent and its complexity. Faced with a text of this kind, the appropriate response is bafflement. Before we read the text, we have to read the myths that surround it, which assist in the understanding of the kind of text we face. The legends

then usefully split the activity of "writing" into two: writing in the sense of composing the meanings and in the more external sense of actually inscribing those thoughts. Unsurprisingly, these required the inhuman powers of Vyāsa, and Gaṇeśa, and miraculously, the legend goes on, Vyāsa avoided burnout and went on to compose other serious stuff such as the *Harivaṃśa* and the *Brahmasūtra*. Hearing the *Mahābhārata* is also meant to produce effects unobtainable by the reading of more mundane texts; even hearing it cleanses us of sin. But the *Mahābhārata* does nothing in a straightforward or conventional fashion. On some philosophic readings, the *Mahābhārata*'s ability to cleanse us is not through some mysterious powers of chanting these verses, but by the fact that understanding them enhances our ability to grasp the meaning of a moral life, and to lead it. It produces in us a *pratyabhijñā*, an anamnetic effect on our powers of moral insight and recognition. Are these legends, in the guise of asserting some things about the writing end of the text, really telling us something about the reading end? Are these ideas not really about Vyāsa and Gaṇeśa, but about us, those who have embarked on an equally vast, equally improbable enterprise? Is the text's dictation by a divinely inspired sage to a divine scribe really a warning to its undivine readers that they are undertaking to grasp a meaning of improbable vastness, difficulty and complexity? This presents to us the enormous single problem: how does one make meaning of a text like the *Mahābhārata*? It is unsurprising that the extraordinary scale and complexity of the text has elicited equally extraordinary attempts to deal with it. I shall be concerned with one of these efforts in the 9-10th century, which has left one of the most lasting and fruitful interpretative legacies regarding the aesthetics of the *Mahābhārata*.

It is a tribute to the philosophic fecundity of the *Mahābhārata* that the question of its meaningfulness could be viewed in two radically different ways. I shall present both arguments, for, although I wish to develop the second, I am not entirely immune to the powerful intellectual allure of the first line of reasoning. It is commonly said that the *Mahābhārata* mirrors life itself, which is a remark of colossal ambiguity and can be read in two entirely different ways. One reading could be that it is pointless to search in the vast, disorderly, fascinating complexity of *Mahābhārata* for a singular meaning: it mirrors life precisely because it is as vast, endless, formless as life itself. There are many ways we can learn from it—by reading single episodes and reflecting on its vast narrative expanse, its gallery of characters, and its astonishing construction of situations—but that is not searching for *a* meaning. The *Mahābhārata* does not have a meaning, just as life does not; it is episodes, events, experiences, both in life and in *Mahābhārata*, in which meaning can be found.

This is a powerful and sophisticated form of cognitive pessimism, but I wish to develop an argument from the opposite side: that despite its scale and complexity, it is possible to find a meaning in the *Mahābhārata*. This argument can be made in two distinct forms. It can be presented as a historical argument in the strict sense, situating a new understanding of the *Mahābhārata* in the aesthetic and philosophic discussions of ninth- and tenth-century Sanskrit culture. I lack the historical and technical scholarship to make this argument with any rigor. But the same argument can be made more theoretically, and inevitably more speculatively, by simply contrasting the two most probable and compelling conceptions of what the story could mean to its readers. For anyone who has spent time with the *Mahābhārata*, which must mean reading different versions and different parts of the text at different points and intervals of one's life, this is likely to be a personal evolution as well: we move, if we engage with it for a long time, from the first meaning of the story to the second.

Interpretative Conditions for the Second Epic: *Śānta Rasa*

The standard understanding of the *Mahābhārata* narrative regards it as a *vīrarasa* text, a narrative of great heroism, although it is immediately apparent to any reader that it presents a picture of heroism in all its complexity and extremity, two qualities that constantly dominate the narrative imagination of the epic. Fundamental relations of human life, which should have an ineffaceable simplicity—between a mother and a son or a wife and her husband—are bent into unrecognizably bizarre shapes such as Kuntī's relation to Karṇa or Draupadī's marriage to five husbands. Human conditions and experiences are constantly pushed to points of extremity: Draupadī suffers a degradation worse than rape, Bhīma extracts a strangely fascinating combination of just retribution and inhumanity. Eighteen *akṣauhiṇī* armies gather on the battlefield, with few survivors. But the standard interpretation is to view it as a story of disputes attendant on royal succession and enjoyment of imperial power, of utter degradation and bravery, and eventually of the restoration of a just dharmic order in which truth triumphs (*satyam eva jayate*) and order is eventually restored. The *Bhagavadgītā* promises the destruction of evil and *dharmasaṃsthāpana*-reestablishment of a just order. After the development of the distinctive aesthetic philosophy of the Kashmir Śaivas, their interpreters claim that, contrary to these semblances, the *Mahābhārata* is a text of the *śāntarasa*, the aesthetic state of tranquility. This involves a major innovation: the suggestion at the level of narrative interpretation that the *Mahābhārata* should be seen as a *śāntarasa* text, which is itself attendant on a more fundamental level of innovation in aesthetics. In previous *rasa* theory,

commentators agreed with Bharata that eight *rasas* existed, corresponding to the eight *sthāyībhāvas* or basic human emotions. Kashmiri theorists, from the time of Udbhaṭa, speculate about *śāntarasa* as a separate theme, and, following this tradition, Abhinavagupta adds a ninth *rasa*, the *śānta* (tranquil), astonishingly through a commentarial operation on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself. This was a fundamental revision of aesthetic theory whose success can be measured from the subsequent recognition of nine *rasas* in Indian artistic reflection.

Bharata's text prosaically states there are eight *rasas*.

> *śṛṅgārahāsyakaruṇā raudravīrabhayānakāḥ* |
> *bībhatsādbhutasaṃjñau cety aṣṭau nāṭye rasāḥ smṛtāḥ*[3]

The *Abhinavabhāratī* maintains the pretense of a commentary, and ostensibly assumes the subordination of commentary to the principal text. Yet, in a remarkable instance of intellectual daring, where the actual innovation defies the formal stance of subservience, Abhinava makes the really *abhinava* (new/ unprecedented) claim that Bharata's intention is to present nine *rasas*, including the *śānta* as the ninth. But he does not state it openly because he expresses his ideas through aesthetic suggestion (*dhvani*). Explicit suggestion of an idea using its own name(*svaśabda*) is inferior to indirect suggestiveness. By a long and dazzlingly arcane demonstration of reading virtuosity, he suggests that the apparent absence of the *śānta* is subtly permeated with its suggested presence. Historically, the time and place of this innovation is intriguing. V. Raghavan, the distinguished Sanskrit scholar, suggests in one of his essays that Abhinava derived the ninth *rasa* from Buddhist philosophical reflection regarding the moral complexities of human life.[4] Since the predominant attitude that Buddhists recommended toward the sufferings of life was an attitude that could be called *śānta*, "imperturbable tranquility," even if the Buddhists did not have a pronounced and properly elaborated philosophical aesthetics, it is a credible hypothesis that the philosophical idea or the moral ideal of the *śānta* was taken through an aesthetic translation of this philosophic vision by the foremost Śaiva commentator on aesthetic matters. The *Abhinavabhāratī* simply enumerated the *rasa*s as nine, in simple, utter, and undeniable defiance of the primary text. Abhinava does not offer any expostulation for this startling emendation of the text he is supposed to be merely elucidating. He simply goes on to offer a rather unconvincingly recondite argument that it is clear from some embedded signals in Bharata's text that the *śānta* is both implied and dominant.

What Is the Commentarial Function?

This raises an obvious question: how was the commentarial function viewed by these philosophers? Of course commentaries were of many different types. Commentaries on Kālidāsa's poetic works could be said to enhance readers' understanding of the narrative complexities, or the subtle aesthetic points of individual turns of phrase, but not alter the content of the text itself. Commentaries were also required for philosophical texts, for a different reason. Works of philosophic speculation regarding major issues required both elucidation and a different activity, which started with philosophical evaluation of the text's claims but could either go on to *elaboration of arguments* that were ambiguous, unclear, or undeveloped or go into *an argument with* the textual propositions if they were questionable. Abhinava could thus go on to elaborate what was undeveloped in the *sūtras* of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, and add elements that were absent earlier, but he did not contradict its major ideas or produce incoherence.[5]

Abhinava does not stop with just an insertion, an addition of another *rasa* to the palette of elementary emotions. Partly because he has to claim that it is implied, he is forced to enlarge the claim, and make it much broader. *Śānta* cannot be a *rasa* that sits laterally with the other eight *rasas*; it must have a different kind of relation to this basic taxonomy. In Abhinava's hands, it becomes a superordinate *rasa* that can encompass, embrace, and override all the rest.[6] Once this extension of the *rasa* repertoire is complete, it becomes possible to turn to the revision of specific aesthetic judgments. Clearly, one of the most startling revisionist suggestions about classical literature is that, in a truly philosophical reading, the great epic reveals itself as a work of the *śānta rasa*.[7]

Gary Tubb's Analysis of the *Dhvanyāloka*

Numerous technical problems come in the way of establishing *śānta* as the predominant *rasa* of a vast and complicated text like the *Mahābhārata*. I am not trying to argue against Gary Tubb's excellent, scrupulously detailed consideration of technical issues with Anandavardhana's *śānta* interpretation of *Mahābhārata*.[8] Tubb demonstrates convincingly the difficulties of accepting the *Mahābhārata* as a text in which *śānta* is the dominant *rasa*, if we follow the technical requirements of *rasa* theory itself. First, there are serious difficulties in inserting the *śānta* inside the textual intentionalities of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, to assert, as the Kashmiri *dhvani* theorists do, that the *śānta* is stated precisely through its absence. The idea that the stable underlying emotion of *śānta*, *nirveda* (dispassion), is suggested in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* by its first place in the list

of the *vyabhicāris* (variable emotional states) is too far-fetched a reading. But the obvious objection to this gloss is that the concept of *dhvani* is appropriate to literary texts. *Nāṭyaśāstra* is a text *about* literature, but it is not a literary text. Ambiguity and indirectness are enhancements in poetic language but major deficiencies in philosophical reasoning. We can have as much of *dhvani* as possible in literature, but it causes confusion if philosophical texts start working through *dhvani*.

Narrative difficulties are also numerous. There are obstacles in the way of regarding Yudhisthira as the main protagonist of the epic, as Tubb shows through his ingenious comparison of the role of Yudhiṣṭhira in the *Mahābhārata* with the figure of the Buddha in Asvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita*. Kashmiri theorists try to get around this by means of repeated observations in the last section of the *Dhvanyāloka* that the main protagonist of the *Mahābhārata* is neither Arjuna nor Yudhiṣṭhira but Vāsudeva.[9] We are left eventually with the powerful suggestion, again at the end of the *Dhvanyāloka*, that "the miserable end of the Vṛṣṇis and the Pāṇḍavas" indicates that the overriding narrative purpose of the epic is to point to the futility of all worldly enthusiasm for power, wealth, love, loyalty, or victory. Since all these states are marked by fulfilled desire, the lesson of the *Mahābhārata* is to teach the value of what Abhinava terms *tṛṣṇākṣayasukha*, the happiness that arises from a cessation of desire. The *Dhvanyāloka* quotes a verse from the *Mahābhārata*'s own index, or *Anukramaṇika*, to gloss it, rather distantly, as

> For the meaning intended to be hereby suggested is as follows. The adventures of the Pāṇḍavas and others which are recounted, since they come to a miserable conclusion, represent the elaboration of worldly illusion, whereas it is the blessed Vasudeva, representing ultimate truth, who is here glorified.[10]

Dhvanyāloka's major reinterpretative statement is not based on signals embedded in textual fragments like the *Anukramaṇika* phrases; it lies in a general observation about the narrative concatenation itself.

> [I]n the *Mahābhārata*, which has the form of a didactic work although it contains poetic beauty, the great sage who was its author, *by his furnishing a conclusion* that dismays our hearts by the miserable ends of the Vṛṣṇis and the Pāṇḍavas, shows that the primary aim of his work has been to produce a disenchantment with the world, and he has intended his primary subject to be liberation from worldly life and the *rasa* of peace.[11]

I wish to suggest a reconstruction of this claim by means of arguments that are obviously modern, using the readings of the *dhvani* theorists as our materials

rather than our methodological guide. I select elements from their analyses but recompose them in other ways, and, of course, we are free to add arguments of our own, from the intellectual culture we inhabit. I wish to offer mainly two suggestions: the first is about the historical direction of change in Sanskrit literary hermeneutics, and the second is a reading of the signification of the narrative ending. This will, I hope, yield two sets of interesting implications: the first set about narrative intentionalities, or the play of intentions in narrative texts, which need to be brought to "re-presentation" in Gadamer's sense;[12] and the second about the process of moral knowledge in the *Mahābhārata* narrative.

Texts as a Field of Intentionalities/Textual Intentionalities

To a lay modern observer, it appears that the revision in aesthetic theory attempts to shift the emphasis in interpretative theory to the readers' side—to the *sahṛdaya*—although most theories make a further distinction between the aesthetic address of the reader and the spectator because the general category of *kāvya* is subdivided into *dṛśya* (visual) and *śravya* (aural).[13] Against earlier theories, which are content to have a vague and unclear notion of aesthetic pleasure, new theories require a rigorous conception of the exact psychological event occurring in the process of aesthetic enjoyment. Through successive philosophical elaborations on what exactly happens in the case of *rasaniṣpatti*,[14] the *dhvani* theorists acquire a clearer picture of the reading event as a complex happening on what could be termed an interpretative field stretching from author to character to actor to reader.[15] As the theory evolves and becomes more elaborate, it gives more detailed attention to what is happening between the actor on the stage and the spectator in the theater, or to the poetic-literary text and its reader. From the angle I want to develop, the fact that the discussion has to deal with the slightly awkward distinction between theatrical and poetic texts—between *nāṭya* and *kāvya*—really serves to bring out an essential feature of aesthetic interpretation. *Nāṭya* brings out the act of mediation in the process of representation more clearly than *kāvya*. Thus, there is some advantage in thinking about the literary text by way of a detour through drama. The argument appears similar to Gadamer's analysis of textuality.[16] Minimally, a text stands between an author and a reader/recipient. It is misleading, in Gadamer's view, to think of understanding the meaning of a text exclusively as an imaginative recapture of the authorial meaning because reading is also, if not equally, a meaning-creating activity. To recapture meanings readers have to work through language, and because of the ineradicable historicity of the lingual, the means of the capture—the language of the reader's time—is partly

a means of help, partly an obstacle. A reader creates the meaning of a text by working through resources available in the historicized formation of his or her culture, which includes the aesthetic language, historically specific intellectual formations, and cultural sensibilities.[17] Interestingly, Gadamer, too, illustrates his point about the literary intention of the receiver with an example from drama. Without an act of representational mediation—by a complex function of an actor/director—the text cannot exist as drama; only when it is *enacted* is it truly a play, not the printed text. The text, in other words, contains the *possibility* of meaning but not, in a fundamentally literal sense, meaning itself. In another evocative example, we cannot have music until it begins to sound; a musical score is a text that contains the potential of musical meaning but not meaning in the real sense. There is a direction in Gadamer's theory of textual meaning: it seeks to shift the emphasis in the analytics of interpretation from an excessively author-sided conception of texts into a more reader-sided one.

Although the earlier stratum of *rasa* theory was not author sided in the same sense, the *dhvani* elaboration appears to move in the same direction as Gadamer's. It elaborates a theory that assigns a proper and specific function to each of these figures in the field of literary meaning. Each of these functions—the author's composition (A), the character's function as the "vessel" of the emotion (B),[18] the actor's evocation (C),[19] and the spectator's/reader's reception/appreciation (D) is an appropriate part of the interpreting process.[20] In the *Abhinavabhāratī*, in the long commentary on the *rasasūtra* involving debates with Bhattalollaṭa, Śaṅkuka, and Bhaṭṭanāyaka, theoretical attention is almost exclusively focused on relations between C and D and secondarily between B and C. Particularly in some phases of the debates, for instance, in Śaṅkuka's argument that the spectator goes through a process of inference starting from a necessary false cognition, the entire philosophical enterprise is to understand the conditions of possibility of spectatorial rapture.[21] There can be two types of theories: theories of *communication,* which ask how the author communicates with the actor and the actor with the spectator; and theories of *reception,* which ask how the spectator understands. What exactly does the spectator see or feel? The *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which constitutes the primary level of this theory, does not offer a theory of communication,[22] and therefore it would be wrong to suggest that here, as in the case of the tradition running from Schleiermacher to Gadamer, a heavily author-sided theory is slowly balanced by a reader-sided correction. Rather, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* states the whole point with such self-defeating terseness that the issue, which is central to an understanding of the *rasa* process, is left deeply obscure. The subsequent process of the *dhvani* theorists' glossing produces a conception of the aesthetic

field, but the distinctive form of its elaboration is from the side of the reader.

Two aspects of the theory appear remarkable: its specification of the series of relations of reception/communication in the aesthetic textual field and its close attention to the exact nature of the intentional acts performed by the different figures. It is not content with simply stating that these are intentional acts, or states. As intentional acts are directional,[23] the theory is trying to ascertain the exact direction and exact nature of the intentional act or state in each case, particularly B, C, and D.[24] The theory suggests that the idea of textual intention needs to be revised, and in fact there is a play of intentionalities, in the plural, on each text. There is an intentional node at each of these points. The fundamental structure of an aesthetic text is such that it allows the intervention of intentionalities at these vital points of the text coming into meaning through the different kinds of intentionalities exercised by the author, actor, musician, and receiver. We are then saved from the need to appeal to the intention of the author in that narrow and absolute sense. Another significant advantage of this revision is that this can accommodate the effects of history much more easily,[25] to deal with the ironic fate of all classic works, which float "in the waters of time,"[26] from their moorings in one age down to transient resting places in very different ages possessing radically different sensibilities. This leads to a "historical" form of the "death of the author" in which the original context of meaning becomes so distant that a methodological demand for reconstruction of authorial intention becomes practically meaningless. Frequent legends of divine authorship rhetorically endorse this sense that the author and the mundane world of his or her intentions are irrecoverable. The reader has to find a strategy to deal with a text without an author.

If we decide not to accept the exact move to attribute the *śāntarasa* intention to the author but to work with the textual field of complex intentionalities in which the actor's intentionality plays on the author's, and the receiver's on the actor's, it becomes possible to maintain that there can be various readings of the text, which are all simultaneously on offer. In case of the *Mahābhārata*, the two contenders for interpretative primacy would be a conventional *vīrarasa* reading and a *śāntarasa* one.

Reading a Narrative Structure: "The Last of Life for Which the First Was Made"

To partially justify the *śāntarasa* reading, we could use a modern technique: looking at the narrative meaning of the epic's "miserable end." Endings are particularly significant in a narrative structure if we take the meaning of the

term *narrative* in a strict sense. Arthur Danto argued in his *Narration and Knowledge* that there is a peculiar structure of temporal relations that defines a "narrative sentence."[27] Two events that occurred at different points in time but are linked by a peculiar relation are captured by a narrative sentence, but its *narrative* character, as opposed to other qualities, lies in the fact that *the later event governs the understanding of the earlier one*.[28] To state that the first prime minister of India was born in 1889 is to use a sentence with a narrative structure because in 1889 the conditions for the existence of a prime minister were not there. A mere child was born to Motilal Nehru, who was, of course, a successful barrister and leading figure of the Indian National Congress. Only after the independence in 1947 were conditions for the existence of a prime minister of India in place. Statements about Nehru that seek some historical understanding of his life, after 1947, must recognize this unavoidably significant fact. In a sense, the second event affects indelibly our understanding of the first one. This can be easily generalized for historical and narrative series. A history of the Russian revolution written in the 1950s would be quite different from one written today. The events of that phase of Russian history have not changed; what has changed is the significance of those events by means of the emergent relation with new events such as the fall of communism. Remarkably, this change is not due to an evaluative change in the observer but to the occurrence of a subsequent set of events, which makes it impossible to write the history of the earlier event without taking into account the later ones. This is made evident in the autobiography, because in that form, the writing of the text and temporality of the last segment coincide. What happens in a narrative of fiction is identical to what happens in a real human life, and in autobiographic retelling. In a sense, narrative unfolding shows that it is for everybody, not Rabbi Ben Ezra alone, that it is the last of life for which the first was made and that we should trust the author, read all, and not be afraid.[29]

If we characterize this as the invariant structure of *narrative judgment* we can see something similar occurring in the process of fictional unfolding. It is common knowledge that the meaning of a story is determined not merely by what happens inside the series of events constituting the story but by how it ends. A story about a mutiny that ends at the moment of the mutineers' triumph is a story that tells a very different tale from one that ends with their eventual defeat. In fact, the idea that literature or poetry is *niyatikṛtaniyamarahita* (free of the restrictions/rules created by fate/nature) and *ananyaparatantra* (dependent on nothing other than itself) stresses precisely this truth. Literary narrative is *not conditional on* historical truth; it is *ananyaparatantra*. A literary sequence

of events is not obliged to follow on a historical sequence. It is unconditional in two senses: it is not conditioned by any sequence of events because of its facticity, and it is also not constrained to follow the syntax of natural things. Within the universe of aesthetics, the rebellion is successful, however much and however finally it might be defeated in the universe of history. This is the sense in which the language of the poet triumphs over the language of the chronicler tied to the rules and conditions of historical happenings. By shifting the end of the story to a point chronologically before the defeat of a rebellion the poet can help the rebels win—*in a different universe*. Following this view of a narrative statement, we could offer a similar argument about the narrative structure in a story. A narrative structure can exist in both factual and fictional accounts, connecting these two by means of their common narrativity, which consists of a movement over time in which events that happen later add significant consequents to the earlier processes and modify their character. The overall meaning of the existing earlier series is modified by a significant later event, because the earlier series then becomes a "preparation" or series leading to the last segment in the chain. What the meaning of the chain of events will be is determined by the nature of the last segment. This will also throw some light on a commonly observed but analytically neglected process. The narratives of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* of course exist in hundreds of versions, and one of the major differentiating features between these stories is precisely the matter of their ending segment. As a child, I read some versions of the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* that end with the conclusion of the Kurukṣetra battle or with Rāma's coronation in Ayodhyā. Often the dramatic enactments of the Rāmlīlā use the same narrative device. It is inexact to view these rescensions as *shorter* forms of the story; these are *different* versions. They do not stop the narrative series at a slightly earlier stage; by making a different segment the last one, they offer us a story with a different structure, which then bears a seriously different meaning. In fact, fiction is teleological in a way that history is not.

Meanings of the *Mahābhārata*

What is the meaning of the *Mahābhārata*? Can we turn this question, given the two readings, into meanings of the two *Mahābhāratas*? Modern literary theory often claims that narratives in modern literary cultures entertain a more pronounced aspiration toward cognitive understanding of the world and the characters' place in it. Sanskrit aesthetic texts routinely assume that literary narratives contain a strong cognitive element, but they refine the exact tone of this cognitive function. Stories offer instruction– *upadeśa*– to

their readers, but in the way of a master (*prabhu*), a friend (*suhṛd*) or a lover (*kāntā*).[30] The *Dhvanyāloka* directly admits that the *Mahābhārata* speaks to us in two styles: as *śāstra* (doctrine) and *kāvya* (art). Literary cultures bear a close relation with interconnected cultures of religious and moral beliefs, but the *Mahābhārata* has its own peculiar way of connecting these two spheres. Ostensibly, the most effective way of teaching moral rules is to enunciate them clearly and offer arguments in their favor. But such an assertoric and argumentative presentation of ethical rules is not always effective, because by stating the rule blandly this teaching does not prepare us for the constant surprises of real moral life. In actual life the situations of ethical choice arise in complex, unpredictable, unrecognizable ways. To take an example from the *Mahābhārata*, it is simple and easy to command the telling of truth, but this can work in case of a relatively simple choice between telling the truth and lying. The *Mahābhārata* carefully constructs the tale of the hermit facing a band of robbers who ask him to tell the truth about a man they have pursued and who is hiding in his ashram.[31] Simple *śāstric* (assertoric) command does not take into account the situational complexity in which pursuing a good act has to occur; the complementary function of narrative is to warn readers about it. The narrative does not merely add a diverting *example* of a rule that is already clear; rather, it adds an indispensable cognitive dimension to our knowledge of moral life by suggesting that, although the rule in its assertoric form is clear, it is misleading in its contextual bareness. The *Mahābhārata* teaches ethical rules by a combination of these two functions: enunciating principles, as in the *Śāntiparva* (Book of the Peace); and narrative complication.

To understand the *śāstric* uptake of the *Mahābhārata*, we should caution ourselves that we are dealing with a premodern culture, which does not presuppose the typically modern enunciation of moral rules as universal injunctions. These are not rules meant for "individuals" who are all alike, living in a shared ethical universe.[32] Characters live in a social world that is deeply segmented along *varṇa* lines. The story gives a narrative exposition of social ideals, particularly the norms of warrior courage, Brahmanical wisdom, and an aspect the epics never neglect, the corresponding virtues of women in these statuses. In elaborating both the norms and the attendant dangers of high status, the quite different feminine encounter with the world is elaborated with equal vividness: Sītā and Draupadī are as indispensable to the narratives' putative norms as Rāma or the Pāṇḍavas. The virtues of heroism and contemplation do not exist separately; they belong together in a social world in which these two groups are dominant. Therefore the "complete" story of their society must be *their* story.

The First *Mahābhārata* and Its Inadequacies

In the conventional view, if we accept that there are eight *rasas*, it is hard to avoid a conclusion that the predominant *rasa* of the *Mahābhārata* must be *vīra*, if a text of that size and complexity can be said to have a dominant *rasa* at all. The narrative illustrates the virtues required by a social world of this character, especially three kinds of virtues: the intellectual ideals required by Brahmanical life, warrior ideals demanded by the truly *kṣatriya* life served in fearless service of a just order, and not least the life of a woman who has to pass through the uncertainties of such a life with undiminished dignity. Women have to make their way in a world in which they do not take decisions but are most affected by them. According to this reading, the life of the warrior is marked by uncertainties that are nonetheless faced with courage, dangers such as facing a numerically much greater army,[33] and the unavoidable temptation of using unjust means.[34] The lives of the Pāṇḍavas show how true *kṣatriyas* can come out of such trials with honor. Even in this reading, the *Mahābhārata* has much narrative complexity, but the global meaning of the expanse of narrative incidents consists in an eventual assurance that, although the proper order of the universe is sometimes seriously challenged, it is eventually restored, and *kṣatriya* glory lies in not pointless victories in mundane battles but in a great defining battle that has this restorative character. A conventional *vīrarasa* reading would confirm a confidence in the unshakable "truth" of this social order. The narrative is one that ends in triumph—not of the characters, the Pāṇḍavas, but of the principle (*satyam eva jayate,* "truth alone conquers").[35]

The *Mahābhārata*, however, has strangely disturbing episodes, too numerous to recount, which put these virtues and the order they reinforce into radical question. Kuntī's curiosity about her boon leads to the birth of her first, secret child, who is abandoned, but is destined for glory, and returns to trouble her peace and the lives of her other children. Or consider the little episode of the Vanaparva where the heroism of the four martially more accomplished brothers is mocked; they are brought back to life by a martially feeble, intellectual elder brother. Think of the beautiful description of Draupadī's delight at Arjuna's success and her dismay at Kuntī's thoughtless order, which determines the rest of her life.[36] This is revealed right at the end when Yudhiṣṭhira explains to Bhīma the reason for Draupadī's fall on the Pāṇḍavas' final "great pilgrimage" (*mahāprasthāna*).[37] Instead of confirming central rules of the moral and social order, the story seems to take pleasure in constructing situations of transgression. There are, of course, the last incidents of their "miserable end," not just the end of the Vṛṣṇis in a drunken

catastrophe that Kṛṣṇa was powerless to stop, but the strange inability of Arjuna, the victor of Kurukṣetra, to lift his bow when attacked by common thieves while escorting Vṛṣṇi women to safety.[38] There are two ways of looking for the dark end of the narrative. One is to follow the explicit instruction from the *Dhvanyāloka* where the dark reminder of catastrophe is contained at the end, narratively governing the meaning of the whole preceding sequence. An alternative way is to be sensitive to the signals of imminent failure, of small disasters that accompany overt victories, of the recurrent signals of moral unmaking constantly shadowing the march of heroic events.

The Second *Mahābhārata*

The addition of the ninth *rasa* makes it possible to register, reflect on, and imaginatively expand on these signs embedded in the interstices, almost the underside, of the narrative structure. Read through the theory of the nine *rasas*, we get a second *Mahābhārata*, fundamentally different from the first in its moral flavor and perhaps its historical import. Commentaries' acts are of two kinds. In some, meanings that are condensed or inexplicit are elaborated by expounding on the meanings of words, their syntactical connections, and their interpretative connotation, but in this case, the *Dhvanyāloka* makes a profound but exceptionally concise gesture toward the epic's meaning, without further elaboration. The task of elaboration is left to the reader. The interpretative act leaves the reader free to follow its direction creatively. The "miserable ending" is not a formula to think through, which absolves readers of the responsibility of reflection, but a trigger to think, an incitement to our own interpretative imagination.

In this reading, the *Mahābhārata* is a text of the *śāntarasa*, a tragic sense of the world, which reveals the insubstantiality of every single component of the *brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya* social-ethical ideal.[39] It shows the political order built around kingship as desperately fallible, starting with the impossibility of determination of the rights of succession. The rule of primogeniture seeks to provide a clear, unquestionable line of royal succession. But the story leads us to a situation in which both sides of a clan can lay claim to rightful kingship and can have a complaint that they lost it through an unjust turn of fate.[40] It shows the futility of valor, which rarely achieves justice, particularly because sometimes the most important injustices happen not on the battlefield but inside the secure and ordered space of the court. The greatest iniquity of the *Mahābhārata* occurs not in the blind and desperate moments of battles but in the public space of the court. This space marked for the announcement and enforcement of justice is turned into the space for the gravest iniquity.

Renowned warriors allow themselves to become part of the most inhuman degradation of a woman. In its totality, the story shows that justice is rarely achieved in the mundane world. Beauty is only rewarded by lust, vulnerability, and indignity. From the moment she enters the world, Draupadī is an object of desire and contention.[41] Detachment is often indistinguishable from moral failure. There can be endless disputes over whether Bhīṣma and Droṇa were at that fateful moment detached or simply morally feeble. Revenge is peculiarly unsatisfying; at the end of the battle, the Pāṇḍavas have extracted revenge, but it is a catastrophe for the winners as much as for the losers. In the night of the *tarpaṇa* offering, when dead warriors are reunited with their loved ones for a few hours of revival, they join in an indistinguishably common mourning.[42]

Other signs in the text are equally profound and intriguing. If we accept that the *śāstric* element is very significant in the *Mahābhārata*, the manner in which this is delivered is astonishingly unusual. The great philosophical peroration in the text is delivered not by a Brahmin whose socially designated function is contemplation but by a warrior. Krishna is, however, a warrior who has given up war and decided, through a subterfuge of common kinship, not to fight at Kurukṣetra. Is there an "event" in this apparent anomaly? Should we read this as a narrative fact? At the end one might wonder if this story points to any *sukha* (happiness) at all, even *tṛṣṇākṣayasukha* (the happiness that arises from the cessation of desire), which, according to this theory, only those readers who "possess pure intuition" (*vimalapratibhānaśālī*) will be able to grasp. If the purpose of the text is to produce moral knowledge—not in the sense of teaching individual moral principles but in the sense of showing what hardship leading a moral life involves—then the darker version of the story throws a clearer light on the world. It does not show us how to lead a moral life; it suggests, rather, that to lead a moral life is something that cannot be shown. The goodness of acts has to be invented at every significant step, and individuals should live in humility given the contingency, fallibility, and imperfection of their efforts to be good.

Aesthetic and Social Ideals

Other questions—of radically nonaesthetic kinds—could be raised about the two readings of the epic. It is fascinating to ask how this aesthetic reflection might be related to the moral universe of this historical epoch.[43] Where did this suggestion to add the *śānta* to the existing *rasa* register come from? V. Raghavan suggested, intriguingly, that the idea of the *śānta* did not come from an internal elaboration of conventional Brahmanical religious thought but is an original invention of the Buddhist tradition.[44] Buddhist philosophical reflection

is much concerned with the meaning of tranquility in conduct, and the *śānta* is the predominant *rasa* of the Buddhist play *Nāgānanda*.[45] Kashmir Śaiva philosophers engaged in a fierce doctrinal battle against the Buddhists and played a significant role in the eventual decline in Buddhist religious influence. Despite this overt doctrinal conflict, on Raghavan's view, Abhinavagupta acted in a manner not uncommon in great philosophical debates: one side absorbs what it considers the most valuable, and therefore less controvertible, elements from the adversarial theory. This strengthens the theory, which can effect this subsumption, and it also ensures, for the surrounding intellectual culture, that despite the decline of a rival school, the valuable elements of its thinking are never lost.[46] Śaiva thinking, while refuting Buddhist arguments, enriched its aesthetic thought by incorporation of the most valuable contribution of the Buddhists, probably by converting a philosophical thesis into an aesthetic theory. Historians have noted that Kashmir in Abhinavagupta's time seems to have been going through serious social and ideological transformation.[47] Buddhism, after all, presented the most fundamental challenge to the moral ideal of the classical Brahmanical society. It is always problematic to connect the changes in aesthetic thinking with contextual social change too directly. But it is an interesting, if speculative, question to ask: does the revision of aesthetic theory and the resultant rereading of the *rasa* of the epic text bear any relation to a transformation of intellectual culture in response to a fundamental social crisis? Alexis Sanderson has suggested that Śaivas were elaborating a new model of religiosity that "tried to transcend the disjunctions and oppositions of the Brahmanical social order" by finding through their doctrine of *pratyabhijñā* a wider base for Hindu religious life (Sanderson 2006). In the absence of more accurate sociological knowledge, it is possible only to speculate about the social and historical roots of such momentous revisions in patterns of intellectual life. But the aesthetic revision is undeniable. Kashmiri theorists deserve our eternal gratitude for their amazing gift to all future readers, for without changing a single word of the text, they managed to give us a second *Mahābhārata*.

Notes

[1] These arguments are discussed and serially rejected in the first section of the AB commentary on the *rasasūtra*. *Nāṭyaśāstra*, chap. 6, 272ff. The ideas of *utpatti* ("origin" or "irruption") is associated with Lollaṭa, *pratīti* (inference) with Śaṅkuka, *vyañjana* (coming into expression) with Ānandavardhana, and the crucial concept of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* (generalization/universalization), which Abhinava accepts but uses somewhat differently from the provocative Bhaṭṭanāyaka, who said with brilliant provocation "*raso notpadyate, na pratīyate, nābhivyañjyate*" (*rasa* neither erupts, nor becomes an object of inference, nor comes into expression). (278).

[2] See the chapter "On the Materialist Dialectic" in Althusser 1970, especially Althusser's insistence that a concept such as alienation may have been used in the theories of both the young and the mature Marx, though its theoretical significance might be different, depending on exactly where it is placed in the general structure of concepts.

[3] *Nāṭyaśāstra* , 266. This is probably the most celebrated line in Indian aesthetics. But by the fourteenth century, in Viśvanātha's *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, the ninth was equally authoritatively established by means of a deft displacement of words.

> *śṛṅgārahāsyakaruṇaraudravīrabhayānakāḥ* |
> *bībhataso 'dbhuta ity aṣṭau rasāḥ śāntas tathā mataḥ* ||
> (SD, 106)

[4] Raghavan 1967.

[5] This is a serious question for Abhinavagupta, shown by the fact that he returns to it in several places, for instance, in another famous passage in the commentary on the *rasasūtra*, where he introduces the metaphor of the *vivekasopānaparamparā* (*Nāṭyaśāstra*, 280), the ladder of reasoning. I discuss this passage briefly in Kaviraj 2005.

[6] For details of the argument, see Raghavan 1967.

[7] This suggestion is advanced, with typical economy and audacity, in the final sections of Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* and is taken up in Abhinavagupta's interlinked commentary, the *Locana* (Dhvanyāloka, 696).

[8] Tubb 1985.

[9] Dhvanyāloka, 691.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., 690–91, emphasis added.

[12] I am referring to the well-known passages in *Truth and Method* regarding the meaning of an act of representation (Gadamer 1981: 97ff.).

[13] I wish to stress that I am not a scholar of Sanskrit or ancient Indian aesthetics,

and therefore the following discussion depends exclusively on modern, primarily Western, cultural theory.

[14] The first section of the commentary on the *rasasūtra* concisely presents these successive attempts at elucidation of that event as *utpatti*, *pratīti*, *vyañjana*, and *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*. *Abhinavabhāratī* commentary on *Nāṭyaśāstra*, chap. 6.

[15] It is interesting to compare the pictures of the act of interpretation in modern theories, such as Ricouer's, and the Kashmiri one. Ricoeur (1976) places the text, as does Gadamer (1981), between the author and the reader.

author___________[_text_]_______________reader

The Kashmiri theorists view the field of interpretation/signification as

Author______character___________actor/reciter__________reader/hearer/spectator

[16] Gadamer 1981: pt. 2, 91ff.

[17] We are dealing with the narrowly aesthetic considerations of historicity, but Gadamer also advances much broader ontological arguments regarding obstacles to a perfect reimagination of authorial meanings.

[18] The term for actor, *pātra* (vessel), captures this inflection perfectly.

[19] The *dhvani* tradition produces the most elaborate, intricate, and subtle analysis of the relationship between the actor and the spectator through its argument, developed particularly in Abhinavagupta, that true understanding must avoid the errors of *svagatatva* (seeing the emotion as "belonging to oneself") and *paragatatva* (seeing it as "belonging to another"). It also offers astonishingly subtle reflections on even such apparently mundane things as our understanding of the idea that Kṛṣṇa was a beautiful person through the suggestive presence of a handsome actor. We must not believe that Rāma was handsome literally like actor X, who is also handsome. We, in any case, have no means of knowing how handsome Kṛṣṇa really was; we must submit ourselves to a free-floating conception of 'handsomeness' that is *generalized*. *Abhinavabhāratī*, 281–83.

[20] *Appreciation* is probably a better translation because, although there is a trend toward *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* or universalization, the offer of the text is not indiscriminate; there is an opposite tendency at work when it specifies that appreciation can be achieved only by those receivers of art who "possess pure intuition" (*vimalapratibhāśālin*).

[21] *Rapture*, though awkward in other respects, is appropriate because the theory emphasizes the spectators' absorption (raptness), which the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* puts beautifully as *vedyāntarasparśaśūnya*, "untouched by any other perception." *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, 48.

[22] It is remarkable how little the *rasasūtra* commits itself to *vibhavānubhavavyabhicār*

isaṃyogāt rasaniṣpattiḥ. The sentence is interpretatively primitive.

[23] Searle 1970.

[24] Paradoxically, in the discussion of the *Mahābhārata* in the *Dhvanyāloka*, the translators, after expending a great deal of effort disentangling the intentional stances of A, B, and D, which opens up the possibility of developing a theory that protects us from using authorial intention as the final court of appeal, relapse into an argument that critically depends on authorial intent (*Dhvanyāloka*, 90–91.) By "the miserable end of the Vṛṣṇis and the Pāṇḍavas," they maintain, the author wishes to show us that the cognitive purpose of the epic is a cessation of desire.

[25] Again this is remarkably similar to Gadamer's ideas about effective historicity (1981: 305–41).

[26] This is the persistent Sanskrit metaphor of *kālasrotas*, the "river of time."

[27] Danto 1985.

[28] Ibid., chap. 8.

[29] Browning, "Rabbi Ben Ezra," stanza 1

[30] See *Kāvyaprakāśa*, 9–10.

[31] See *Mahābhārata*, 8.49.41ff.

[32] See Mikhail Bakhtin's argument, elaborated in the essay "Epic and Novel" (1990), that epic characters come from a social universe that is segmented between groups but homogeneous within them.

[33] An example is Arjuna's demeanor of untroubled confidence in his unequal battle with the Kuru army during the *uttaragograha* (the capture of Virāṭa's cattle) at the end of the Virāṭaparva.

[34] A celebrated example is Yudhiṣṭhira's eventual agreement to use a partial lie in the death of Droṇa, his teacher. Droṇaparva, *Mahābhārata*.

[35] In various parts of the narrative this is indicated directly. For instance, when Yudhiṣṭhira asks for Droṇa's blessings before the commencement of the battle, Droṇa says *yato dharmas tataḥ kṛṣṇo yataḥ kṛṣṇas tato jayaḥ* (*Mahābhārata*, 6.41.55).

[36] *viddhaṃ tu lakṣyaṃ prasamīkṣya kṛṣṇā* |
pārthaṃ tu śakrapratimaṃ nirīkṣya ||
svabhyastarūpāpi naveva nityaṃ |
vināpi hāsaṃ hasatīva kanyā ||
madād ṛte 'pi skhalatīva bhāvair |
vācaṃ vinā vyāharatīva dṛṣṭyā ||
(*Mahābhārata* 1.179.22 and 1851*)

[37] Mahāprāsthānikaparva, *Mahābhārata*.

[38] Mausalaparva, *Mahābhārata*.

[39] The use of the term *tragic* is both helpful and misleading. It is the closest term of technical aesthetics through which we can partly elucidate what the *śānta* means, but it is, in the strict sense, quite different from the tragic sense. It is a form of tranquility that is achieved after one goes through the experience of suffering, when its intensity is stilled and the immediate suffering is distanced. In Tagore's poem, *Karṇakuntīsaṃvād* Karṇa describes the end of the war in similar terms: *heritechi śāntimay śūnya pariṇām* (I can see the end—empty, and tranquil), and he asks Kuntī *je pakṣer parājay, se pakṣa tyājite more koro na ahvan* (Do not ask me to leave the side of those destined for defeat). Tagore 1972: 403.

[40] Dhṛtarāṣṭra was blind, but should this cause the royal line to pass to Pāṇḍu's lineage or is it a disability that is personal and should not affect his line?

[41] It is doubtful whether any modern narrative can rival the *Mahābhārata* in its demonstration of the terrible effects of regarding women as objects of desire and tokens of indirect exchanges of male malevolence.

[42] Putradarśanaparvādhyaya, Āśramavāsikaparva, *Mahābhārata*. It is interesting to reflect on the nature of this narrative element. It is for men to destroy and women to try to heal and for men to kill and women to mourn.

[43] For a general magisterial survey of the history of Sanskrit literature, see Pollock 2006, the central question of which is the connection between culture and power.

[44] Udbhaṭa recognizes *śānta* as can be seen from his *Kavyālaṃkārasārasaṃgraha*. He is thus the first commentator on the NS and the first ālaṃkarika now known to have definitely begun to speak of *rasa*s as nine in number. He may therefore have made the necessary alteration in the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as shown above and pointed out by Abhinavagupta" (Raghavan 1967: 13). The revised text is:

> *sṛngārahāsyakaruṇāḥ raudravīrabhayānakāḥ*
> *bībhastādbhutaśāntās ca nava nāṭye rasāḥ smṛtāḥ*. (13)

For a subtle and complex analysis of the Kashmiri aesthetics, see Lawrence McCrea, *The Teleology of Poetics in Medieval Kashmir*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass, 2008.

[45] NĀ.

[46] It is possible to find examples of this in contemporary social and political theory. Rawls's theory of liberalism, for example, can be viewed as one that subsumes elements of socialist thought—such as its concern for justice and egalitarianism—to construct a version of liberalism that is much harder to argue against (Rawls, 1970).

[47] Pollock 2006.

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6

The Vernacular Cosmopolitan: Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda*

Jesse Ross Knutson

Jayadeva's work is a masterpiece and it surpasses in its completeness of effect any other Indian poem. It has all the perfection of the miniature word-pictures which are so common in Sanskrit poetry, with the beauty which arises as Aristotle asserts from magnitude and arrangement.[1]

— A. B. Keith

Jayadeva, an author trained in music as well as the Brahmin's craft . . . who wandered far to gain real insight into the minds of his people. His life and art were one; he had romantically wooed and wedded a beautiful wife; they continued to travel, he singing verses of his own while she danced. This was not on the same level as the ordinary country jongleur, for in their performance they exemplified the sublime love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, a theme Jayadeva developed in his Gītagovinda *for Lakṣmaṇasena's court. But in his country songs he used a more popular idiom. . . . A festival is still annually celebrated at Jayadeva's birthplace Kenduli, not in memory of his* Gītagovinda *but because he introduced a new and joyous life with faith in a personal god who is close to rich and poor.*[2]

— D. D. Kosambi

A major work will either establish the genre or abolish it; and the perfect work will do both.[3]

— Walter Benjamin

Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda*, 'Govinda [i.e., Kṛṣṇa] in Song,' is an exceptional work of Sanskrit literature, in the dual sense of being uniquely celebrated and simply unique. The poem is a new genre unto itself, and for its time almost unique in being so, emerging in the medieval period twofold sui generis.[4] The emergence of the *campū* (mixed verse and prose) genre in the medieval South offers only a dim parallel, for its features can be found inchoate in ancient

inscriptions.[5] In all but the earliest periods of Sanskrit literature, new genres rarely ever emerged with such suddenness. The marvel that was Jayadeva's poem did not go unquestioned; the remarks of the last great classicist of the tradition, Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja (ca. late seventeenth century), offer testimony.

> Jayadeva and others, in the *Gītagovinda* and other works, have broken with this condition [of propriety] accepted by all connoisseurs, just as if they were wild rutting elephants. Thus it is inappropriate for someone of the present, following their example, to compose descriptions in this manner. . . . The explicit depiction, including all its attendant external signs, of the erotic love of gods being consummated, just as if it were that of humans, is improper.[6]

Here it is hard to decide whether Jagannātha objects more to the poem's form or to its content. On the one hand, the problem seems to be what the poem is about: the erotic love of gods.[7] On the other hand, the critic targets a mode of description: "explicit depiction, including all . . . attendant external signs" (*sphūṭīkṛtasakalānubhāvavarṇanam*). The poem's impropriety is clearly comprehensive in Jagannātha's mind, implicating the structure as well as the spirit of the work. Form and content reflect on and implicate each other.

The present essay takes its cue from Jagannātha's concept that form and content reflect on each other in a significant way in the *Gītagovinda*. The work must be evaluated in terms of their dialectic. In the metrically and aesthetically peculiar songs of the *Gītagovinda*, for example, we can read an appropriation of the vernacular literary logic that was beginning to dawn in South Asia at the beginning of the second millennium. The songs are encircled, though, by verses of the purest classical grandeur. We can identify here, on the level of form, a consolidation of two distinct literary registers. On the level of content, we can read the juxtaposing of a pastoral/folk erotic scenario (the adolescent Kṛṣṇa tale) with the trappings of a classical courtly (urbane/cosmopolitan) eroticism, parallel to what we find in the work of Jayadeva's greatest contemporary, Govardhana.[8] The cosmopolitan and the vernacular strategically coincide in Jayadeva's poem, and the *Gītagovinda* thus represents a great and ingenious mediation of the units of analysis developed by Pollock in his seminal histories of cosmopolitan and vernacular in premodern India and beyond.[9] My study centers on the intriguing parallelism and interplay of form and content, their "mutual negotiation," as I will come to call it. Then it branches out to the work's immediate social context: the literary salon at the court of king Lakṣmaṇasena (ca. twelfth-thirteenth century, Bengal), of which Jayadeva was a leading member.

The first indication of the poem's artistic logic, of what Jayadeva's poem meant, comes, however, from what it came to mean over time and what it has come to mean. This is where we must begin. Jayadeva's status in traditions of reception is as unique and bizarre as that of his poem, making this the first real concern for anyone who would understand the *Gītagovinda*'s emergence. The poem triggered an explosion of cultural contortions and heavy-handed appropriations that continues in the present. This process has taken on a life of its own and to some extent obfuscated understanding of the historical Jayadeva and his work; yet as a cultural process of adaptation and interpretation, it has also managed to create a significant analytical perspective on the same.

Who Is Jayadeva? Who Was Jayadeva?

Let us answer this question by first asking another one: who was Jagannātha? Sheldon Pollock has provided some useful inroads here.

> [T]here are intimations in his poetry of a new interaction between Sanskrit and vernacular-language writing. Some of his poetry . . . is probably indebted to earlier texts in Old Hindi; one poem in the *Bhāminīvilāsa* is almost certainly derived from a text of Bihārilāl, a celebrated poet of the previous generation. What such parallels above all indicate, unfortunately, is how very little information we have, even for a period as relatively late as the end of the seventeenth century, about the real interactions between cosmopolitan and vernacular courtly poets. Little is known about their familiarity with each others' works; about what it signified (to them or their audiences) to adapt vernacular verse into Sanskrit, or Sanskrit verse into the vernacular. (2001: 17)

Granted that our information is less than we would like it to be, answers to some of these crucial questions are at least suggested by Jagannātha's reaction to Jayadeva. If Jayadeva, by introducing peculiar meters and other characteristic vernacular features such as rhyme, refrain, and brevity, had made Sanskrit vernacular during the first era of the literary vernacular's ascendance (early second millennium CE), Jagannātha, by introducing Persian and vernacular themes and conventions into classical Sanskrit forms, did just the contrary: making the vernacular Sanskrit, during a period when the process begun during Jayadeva's time had completed itself, when literary life had come to be dominated by the vernaculars, and Sanskrit was nearing its last days as an organic literary force. The tables were turned by Jagannātha's time, but the two poets had comparable roles to play in the working out of a single dialectical process of Sanskrit-vernacular negotiation.

What did it mean to adapt the vernacular into Sanskrit or Sanskrit into the vernacular? Clearly the latter was profoundly unacceptable to Jagannātha, while there was a discernible role for the former. Freud might have seen in this something of "the narcissism of minor differences," though we might join with Jagannātha in considering the differences less than minor.[10] What this type of process meant for others slightly less invested in the classical cosmopolitan mode is, however, a longer story, as a few significant examples will serve to make clear.

The oversight is a telling one in Burton Stein's (posthumous) *History of India*: "In the twelfth century, bhakti hymns were composed in Bengali by the saint Jayadev" (Stein 1998: 123). The confusion as to Jayadeva's language, baffling at first, alludes to a long tradition of seeing him as a vernacular poet-saint. The earliest textual incarnation of this tradition is the early-seventeenth-century Braj Bhāṣā hagiography *Bhaktamālā*, by Nabhadas of Galta, where the author of the *Gītagovinda* is depicted as a saint and mystic, the stuff of legends and miracles, alongside other canonical vernacular poet-saints. (D. D. Kosambi's biographical panegyric [1957], quoted in the epigraph, is indebted to this text.) It is as if Jayadeva had a separate career as a vernacular poet without actually having written anything in the vernacular. Verses in a sort of Sanskritic old Hindī are ascribed to a "Jaidev" in the Sikh holy book, the *Ādi Granth*, alongside true vernacular poet-saints such as Sur and Ravidās.[11] The *nirguṇabhakti* ('devotion to god without form') verses in the *Granth* have nothing in common with Jayadeva's oeuvre, but nonetheless scholars have tended to mechanically assume the correctness of the attribution.[12] Through these sorts of appropriations the notion of Jayadeva as vernacular saint was crystallized, but the origin of the tradition most probably lies in the land where the poet's career first took off.

The popular understanding of Jayadeva today still bears the weight of the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* movement's appropriation of his work. The most fascinating aspect of this school, which first started to thrive in Bengal during the first half of the sixteenth century, is its theologization of aesthetics or aestheticization of theology, first formulated by one of the saint Caitanya's chief disciples, Rūpa Gosvāmī. In the work of this poet and theologian-philosopher, the language of Sanskrit poetics was brought to bear on the religious experience of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. An erotic attachment to Kṛṣṇa was even celebrated as the supreme state of religious observance. Literary works depicting the erotized aspect of the deity became scripture, and the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava*s were the first to quote extensively from the *Gītagovinda* in their theoretical writings. One legacy of these mystics' great appreciation for the *Gītagovinda* is that the poem has

become indissociable from them in the modern imagination, as witnessed by, for instance, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya's reference to a Jayadeva song in his novel *Ānandamaṭh* (The Abbey of Bliss) as "the sweet stotra composed by the *gosvāmī,*" as well as the widespread manner of casually referring to the poet as "Jayadeva *gosvāmī*" in contemporary articles and editions of the *Gītagovinda* in Bengal.[13]

Sanskrit and vernacular (Bengali) coexisted comfortably in the literary works of the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava*-s. There was extensive poetic production in both languages, but the theoretical writing was all done in Sanskrit. The *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* movement represents the most forceful attempt ever to situate *bhakti*, originally and predominantly a vernacular phenomenon, within the terms of Sanskrit theoretical orthodoxy, and Jagannātha objected very strongly in writing to this as well.[14] Jagannātha's parallel condemnations indicate what is in fact a parallel trajectory in the *Gītagovinda* and *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavaism*. Both had adapted *bhakti*/vernacular elements into unfamiliar Sanskrit genres.

Thus the anachronism of calling Jayadeva a *gosvāmī* parallels the anachronism of calling him a vernacular poet. In fact, we have very little of anything that seems like vernacular poetry from Sena Bengal. Not only did Jayadeva not write in Bengali during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but virtually no one else did that we know of. So why has he been thought of as a vernacular poet? Clearly it is because he played such a crucial role in the original Sanskrit appropriation of the vernacular, that he became inseparable from the vernacular and the popular, even though he was in so many ways a fundamentally classical poet. He could not quite fit into the classical tradition and so was assigned an alternate identity by posterity, straddling the realm of the vernacular and vernacular religiosity.

This was not, however, the only possible outcome. An early commentary on the *Gītagovinda*, Śaṅkaramiśra's *Rasamañjarī,*[15] offers an aggressive interpretation of the oft-quoted third verse, in which Jayadeva praises himself and the other poets of the Sena salon (see below). Śaṅkaramiśra assigns the poet an exceptional status of an altogether different sort. He refuses to entertain the comparison between the poet and his contemporaries, which the verse articulates, and reinterprets all the praises for Jayadeva's fellow poets into aspersions. The passage is amusing:

> A minister of Lakṣmaṇasena named Umāpatidhara "makes speech blossom," that is, he proliferates it. Thus Umāpatidhara's speech is devoid of sweetness, devoid of pleasant features of word and meaning. . . .

> A poet named Śaraṇa is "notable," that is, praiseworthy "in the speedy composition of abstruse poetry." And thus the work of the poet Śaraṇa, too, is fraught with the defects of hidden meaning, etc., and devoid of the pleasant features of clarity, etc. . . .
>
> For his fashioning the best examples of literature "in which the erotic sentiment is supreme" . . . for his weaving it into poetry, "no one competes with master Govardhana." Here, with the phrase "erotic. . . ," the sense is that he is only competent with respect to poetic works in which the erotic sentiment is dominant. When it comes to the depiction of other sentiments, he, too, is verily inadequate. . . . His "mastery" is with reference to the study of random subjects, useless for the composition of good poetry. Thus "master" (*ācārya*) is said sarcastically. And thus the sense is that he is not a good poet and does not have the heart of a good poet. . . .
>
> Dhoyī . . . is a master of sounds [*śrutidhara*, "memorizing discourse on first hearing it," generally meaning "wise, learned, intelligent"], which is to say that he understands composition merely as an object of listening. The sense is that he only grasps the utterance in terms of its pronunciation. . . .

"Only Jayadeva knows the refinement of verbal arrangement," the quintessence of composing works endowed with tropes and pleasant verbal features. Thus there is no satisfaction in hearing others' poems as there is in hearing Jayadeva's poem. The sense is that only this one is to be listened to.[16]

Here there is nothing of the miraculous, simply a miraculously good poet. Likewise the peculiar Sanskrit Sufi tale from medieval Bengal, the *Sekaśubhodayā,* recognizes Jayadeva to have been a court poet. It tells, in simple Sanskrit with the occasional Bengali verse interspersed, the story of the arrival in Lakṣmaṇasena's kingdom of a Sufi saint who proceeds to establish his absolute authority through magical acts and general charisma. Jayadeva, Govardhana, Umāpatidhara, and so on are all characters in this narrative, which Sukumar Sen dated to the second half of the sixteenth century, but here again Jayadeva is a court poet, not a saintly ascetic.

A sentimentalized religious view of the poet has nonetheless become current today as witnessed by many recent cultural products. Examples include the *Amar Chitra Katha* comic *Jayadeva,*[17] and more recently the Bengali serial *Jayadeb-Padmābati,* which aired on ETV Bangla in India.[18] Jayadeva's virtually unknown political poetry, with its occasional gore and brutality, has been edited out of our image of this author for centuries.[19] Jayadeva has himself been edited out of the history of courtly *kāvya* to some extent.

To find out how Jayadeva may have himself participated in this process we can begin by asking some questions about form. How do the poem's structure

and form condition its peculiar status? How was the *Gītagovinda* classical and unclassical, vernacular and unvernacular? How did it enshrine something of a vernacular *bhakti* style yet also retain a relationship to high classicism?

Form

It takes no more than a glance at the *Gītagovinda* to reveal that it is utterly unlike any work of Sanskrit literature that preceded it from the most purely formal point of view. Each of the twelve chapters (*sarga*-s) of the poem contains between one and four songs (adding up to a total of about twenty-four and constituting the overwhelming bulk of the text) whose metrics and aesthetics are decidedly vernacular in their resonance. Yet, the meters correspond to nothing exactly anywhere else in Sanskrit, Prakrit, or vernacular poetry.[20] Several features, however, give the verses a distinctly vernacular character. The meters are for the most part very short, and they feature invariable end-rhyme. Unvarying end-rhyme has a life in South Asia just as it does in European languages. Rhyme had some minor appearance from time to time in Sanskrit poetry, but it never formed the ultimate principle for meter and style, while it was central to vernacular poetics from the beginning. In Europe, distribution of the importance of rhyme across the classical-vernacular divide is basically equivalent. It seems that rhyme started to gain some minor importance in medieval Latin verse, yet this was still on a scale that dwarfed the Sanskrit tradition (Jayadeva was one of the only authors ever to compose in unvarying end-rhyme).[21]

The meters of the *Gītagovinda*'s songs are also not quantitative in the classical way (based on fixed alternations of heavy and light syllables). Rather they use a stress-accent, like vernacular verse in South Asia as well as Europe, employing the alternative principle of *mātrā* or *mora*, "syllabic instant", in which heavy and light syllables still count but only in terms of their overall quantity. Long and short syllables occur haphazardly, instead of falling into the grandly patterned order of the classical. Again the meters are not exactly those used in any vernacular language (or anywhere else for that matter).

It might not be all that unintuitive how the fragrance of the vernacular could be more readily drawn into Sanskrit through an inexact imitation. The phenomenon could be compared to Milton's English, so pregnant with Latin and yet so individual and free. Writing Sanskrit in a vernacular meter would have drawn attention to the inescapable difference of Sanskrit. Bringing in the feel and fragrance through the use of peculiar metrical experimentations could paradoxically allow Sanskrit to invoke the vernacular in a more compelling fashion.

A comparison may help show what is meant by "the feel of the vernacular." Let us examine a verse from the last book of Baḍu Caṇḍīdās's Early Middle Bengali *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrttana* alongside a stanza from one of the *Gītagovinda*'s songs. This is a verse in Caṇḍīdās's Bengali.

āyiśo la baḍāyi rākhaho parāṇ
sahiteṃ nāroṃ manamathabāṇ/ (10.7.1)

Come Baḍāyi, save my life! I cannot endure the arrows of the heart-churning love god.

This is a verse in Jayadeva's Sanskrit.

tyajati na pāṇitalena kapolam/
bālaśaśinam iva sāyam alolam// (4.2.6)

Her hand does not forsake her cheek, which looks like the young crescent moon motionless in the evening sky.

A lilting stress-accent is shared by the two verses. Rich alliteration is likewise evident, as is the end-rhyme shared by both verses. The *Gītagovinda*'s similarity to the vernacular is immediately evident; so is the fact that it is not exactly the vernacular. Edwin Gerow painstakingly analyzed the prosody of Jayadeva's meters, and demonstrated that they are not as free as vernacular meters. He drew attention to an element of "fixity," that is, a preference for certain sequences of syllables.[22] His conclusion, however, that the *Gītagovinda* does not hence evoke the vernacular is myopic. The fixity he discovered is rather one of the key elements of the poem's inexactitude in vernacular imitation, a crucial part of what makes the vernacular evocation compelling and haunting.

There are some other unusual things about these songs. All the songs contain a refrain that construes with each verse, often supplying it with an otherwise absent grammatical completeness. Take the first song of the second chapter. A verse like the seventh makes no sense on its own.

maṇimayamakaramanoharakuṇḍalamaṇḍitagaṇḍam udāram/
pītavasanam anugatamunimanujasurāsuravaraparivāram//

It is just a list of words, all in the accusative case. It only becomes grammatically animated by the refrain.

rāse harim iha vihitavilāsaṃ
smarati mano mama kṛtaparihāsam/

> My heart remembers Hari (Kṛṣṇa), taking delight, amusing himself in the Rāsa dance.

The verse the refrain follows amounts to nothing more than a big adjective, further modifying Hari.

> [Hari] whose glorious cheeks are adorned with earrings of jeweled crocodiles, who wears a yellow garment, and is attended by the best retinue of sages, men, gods, and demons.

The grammatical structure of Sanskrit is temporarily neutralized, and the verse functions as a simple adornment like the one it describes. Even though the effect of the verse is not exclusively vernacular—such pendant grammar is characteristic of such quintessentially Sanskrit genres as Bāṇa's prose poems (*gadyakāvya*)—this is still another objective way in which the Sanskrit might be seen to mime the vernacular.[23] It is as if temporarily relieved of its inflectional elaborateness, in the way that a vernacular grammar tends to be.

The songs transcend Sanskrit. They abound in figures of sound (*śabdālaṅkāra*-s, e.g., alliteration, etc.) such that they can be appreciated independent of their comprehension. Many can be easily understood by someone who knows virtually no Sanskrit. There is effectively one set of relationships between the words, one syntactical structure that needs to be grasped, and then the rest becomes clear by analogy if the vocabulary is more or less familiar. As is the case today, some of the names of Kṛṣṇa/Viṣṇu and some Sanskrit vocabulary would have been well within the grasp of someone who was completely illiterate or unlearned in eastern India/Bengal about eight hundred years ago.[24]

Yet the songs' transcendence of Sanskrit is also in a sense negated. The stylistic and metrical departure of the songs is embedded in the classical tradition by the poem's architecture: the songs never stand alone in the poem. They are invariably encircled by Sanskrit verses in a multitude of elaborate classical-quantitative meters. At the end of each song, just before the verse in classical meter, however, a formal feature appears that decidedly demarcates the vernacular territory from the classical. Each song ends with a *bhaṇita* (signature) verse of a type that any reader of North Indian *bhakti* poetry will find familiar. The convention of the signatory verse clearly has its origin in vernacular genres, the oldest of them presumably from the South, and it was something very new to Sanskrit at this time.[25] It was never destined to hold much importance in the history of Sanskrit poetry, while for the vernacular, especially *bhakti* poetry, it was integral. A verse like the following, for

example, completes every song of the *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrttana*.

> 'I see your body made of flowers,' sang Caṇḍīdās, Bāsalī's devotee.[26]

And still an intractable problem of "the chicken and the egg" (or "the seed and the sprout," as it is said in Sanskrit, *bījāṅkuranyāya*) haunts the definition of the *Gītagovinda*'s relationship to vernacular style. While we may be able to locate prototypical *bhaṇita* verses in vernacular works earlier than the *Gītagovinda*—the archaic Bengali *Caryāgīti* (or *Caryāpada*) poems include them—certain other features that cannot but strike the modern Bengali or Maithili reader as quintessentially vernacular can only be attested in the wake of the *Gītagovinda*. The word *padāvali*, "arrangement of words," in the poem's second verse, as an adjective for Jayadeva's poetry, has, for example, come to denote a specific vernacular genre of *bhakti* lyric in medieval Maithili, Bengali, Brajabuli, and so on, and Jayadeva's *padāvalī*-s are often mentioned side by side with those of the vernacular poets Vidyāpati and Caṇḍīdās. It is to be assumed, then, that the *Gītagovinda* was both constituted by early vernacular poetry, some of which may not have come down to us, and constitutive of its emergent idioms. Herman Tieken has suggested, however, that the studied simplicity of the *Gītagovinda*'s songs ultimately hearkens unmistakably back to early Tamil poetry.[27] This is not to say that Jayadeva knew Tamil but only that in the *longue durée* of literary history a deep connection can be found with vernacular poetry. In purely formal/structural terms, then, the *Gītagovinda* represents the working through of a cosmopolitan-vernacular dialectic at the dawn of what Sheldon Pollock has termed "the vernacular millennium."[28]

Yet the elements of contradiction in Jayadeva's poem also go beyond the horizontal categories of cosmopolitan and vernacular, attaining to something more vertical. As Kosambi's remarks implied, however ecstatically (in the epigraph), and as I have also alluded, the poem is in part a genuinely popular work, even if it is also an elite, courtly product. As I noted, the songs can be understood and appreciated without knowledge of Sanskrit, and the *Gītagovinda* has historically proven itself popular, spawning adaptations in popular dance and painting for centuries. Central to this elite-popular negotiation is the poem's peculiar religiosity. *Stotra*-s suffused with some kind of *bhakti* had of course already been composed in Sanskrit, but it was something else to taint high *kāvya* like Jayadeva did (or *śāstra* like the *Gauḍīya*-s did). Sanskrit *kāvya* was in a sense a very secular phenomenon. In it mythology and religion were subordinated to fundamentally aesthetico-political imperatives by the early medieval period,[29] and the effusive religiosity that creeps forth from time to

time in the *Gītagovinda* is somewhat out of tune with the grand tradition of courtly literature. This brings us to questions of content. How does the poem contain and at once exceed the ethos of courtly *kāvya*?

Content

The theme of Kṛṣṇa as cowherd libertine had prior to the *Gītagovinda* received scant attention in Sanskrit's highest literary register.[30] Its earliest known textual elaboration is found in the Sanskrit *Purāṇa*-s, where *kāvya*'s signature eroticism is not usually evident. The courtly *kāvya* mode of love tends to be characterized by an absence-presence dialectic. The two modes of love, *vipralambhaśṛṅgāra* (love in absence or separation) and *sambhogaśṛṅgāra* (love in union or enjoyment) specified by the poeticians continually haunt each other, with fantasy threatening to overtake reality in a kind of "hallucinatory wishful psychosis," as Freud might have put it.[31] The love story of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, with its mutual fixation and anguish, incidentally a very obscure if not totally unknown tale prior to the *Gītagovinda*, serves to adapt the bucolic romping Kṛṣṇa into these psychological and aesthetic terms, as the following verse emblematizes.

> Kaṃsa's enemy (Kṛṣṇa) fixed Rādhā in his heart, a chain binding him to residual traces of past lives, and abandoned the women of Vraja.[32]

If, on the level of form, the *Gītagovinda* had made cosmopolitan *kāvya* vernacular, on the level of content a rustic theme (with a likely folk origin) was made cosmopolitan and urbane. In this sense the trajectories of form and content are equal and opposite: on the level of form, courtly *kāvya* becomes its other, while on the level of content, *kāvya*'s other becomes courtly. The inverse departures of form and content balance each other in a sort of cultural double negative. This serves to acknowledge the precise force of each term the poem manipulates, while also throwing these terms up in the air. We can call this the mutual negotiation of form and content, a process whereby a special, perhaps it would also be correct to say abstract or mystical, perspective is created in terms of which to experience and understand the poem. Partly through this mechanism, the *Gītagovinda* came to acquire a peculiar and exceptional status.

One outcome of the process of mutual negotiation is that the rural, insofar as it is drawn into an elite cosmopolitan register, imposes itself on, or superposes itself against, the urban/cosmopolitan, in a fashion vaguely parallel to a work of Jayadeva's colleague, the *Āryāsaptaśatī* by Govardhana. The seventh chapter of the *Gītagovinda* is called "Clever and Urbane Nārāyaṇa (Kṛṣṇa)" (*nāgaraś cāturanārāyaṇa*). Yet here itself we find an eroticism verging on the

vulgarity associated with the rustic "*grāmya*" in Sanskrit poetics.

> He hangs a jeweled thread on her perfumed loins and plump thighs, a house of Eros and a golden throne of the love god, as if it were a banner dangling in the shape of a smile over a gateway.[33]

The thinly veiled reference to sexual penetration, in the figuration of her loins as "a house of Eros," is again reminiscent of many verses in the *Āryāsaptaśatī*.[34] I can find, however, no precise parallel for the focus on the woman's crotch as the house's entrance. Later in the poem her loins are referred to as "a cave for the love god's elephant" (*Śambaradāraṇavāraṇakandare*, 12.2.7). The *Gītagovinda*, like the *Āryāsaptaśatī*, clearly contains a sexuality that exceeds the courtly.

Yet somehow the terms of urbane aristocratic eroticism are also respected. In the *Gītagovinda*, for example, we find none of the lavish references to dairy products that typify the rural scenarios in the *purāṇic* or vernacular treatments of Kṛṣṇa's rural adventures. The poem is about love as pain and pining, with the rustic license we occasionally find in the *Āryāsaptaśatī* kept at a minimum. The rural has been incorporated into the terms of the courtly in the mode of an elite pastoral, revealing only hints, albeit strong ones, of incongruity.

Yet the incongruous is sometimes paradoxically congruous with the logic of the poem. Features at odds with the mainstream ethos of courtly *kāvya* find their place in the *Gītagovinda* through yet another mechanism. Elements of strangeness serve the poem's mystical aura, just as the poem's otherworldliness further serves to create a unique perspective on its departures of form and content. From the poem's first verse, with its dark forest imagery paralleling the first verse of Dante's *Inferno*, a surreal juxtaposition casts us into the realm of the transcendent and irrational.

> The sky is thick with clouds, the forest ground dark with *tamāla* trees.
> "He is afraid of the dark. Rādhā you bring him home." Thus urged on over paths, through groves, past trees, at Nanda's order, may the secret games of Rādhā and Mādhava triumph on the bank of the Yamunā.[35]

Here Kṛṣṇa is presented at once as a child afraid of the dark and as an erotized adult playing secret sex games with his lover. Ironically a poem utterly devoted to the negotiation of contrariety begins with an unresolved contradiction. Some of the commentators address the issue that mentioning Kṛṣṇa as a child in an erotic context could undermine the erotic aesthetic emotion (*Śṛṅgārarasa*) and lead to *rasābhāsa*, "false aesthetic passion."[36] This problem is dismissed by the commentary *Jayantī* (whose author is also called

Kṛṣṇa) on the grounds that since Kṛṣṇa is an incarnation (*avatāra*) of Viṣṇu he appears at will in different forms, thus interpreting the verse in the same way we suggest: the unresolved contradiction referring us to the transcendent and irrational logic of divinity. This broader process of negotiation can be considered a "negotiation of the negotiation" whereby elements of the bizarre and incongruous serve the poem's religious ethos, while its peculiar religious ethos conversely serves to further culturally harmonize its experiments with form and content.

This brings us to questions of context. If the poem's departures of form and content are mutually implicatory and mutually constitutive, and if the poem's religious ethos is likewise implicated in this complex cultural operation, in what kind of time and space were such gestures meaningful? How does the *Gītagovinda* relate to its courtly context and the works of other Sena poets? How does it relate to Jayadeva's other works?

Context

Many of the martial verses by Jayadeva in the royal anthology *Saduktikarṇāmṛta* would seem to preempt his later image as a world-renouncing mystic.[37] Yet there are also many poems ascribed to him in the *Saduktikarṇāmṛta* that have tender, amorous themes. Although only a few of them are also found in the *Gītagovinda*, many others are strongly reminiscent of that poem's often delicate eroticism. Many of the verses attributed to the Sena kings in the anthology are erotic as well, and there also seems to be a broader stylistic convergence. For this reason, it would be unsurprising to learn that Jayadeva had been a tutor to the kings, perhaps alongside the other poets. Lakṣmaṇasena and his grandson Keśavasena both echo explicitly in one of their poems part of the final quarter of the first verse of the *Gītagovinda* (which we examined at the close of the previous section). The verses were certainly composed as part of a *samasyāpūraṇa* (a game in which contestants are obliged to compose a poem with a pregiven ending).

> *Gītagovinda* 1.1: . . . *rādhāmādhavayor jayanti yamunākūle rahaḥkelayaḥ* ,
>
> Lakṣmaṇasena, *Sad.* 272: . . *rādhāmādhavayor jayanti valitasmerālasā [dṛṣṭayaḥ*,
>
> Keśavasena, *Sad.* 270: . . . *rādhāmādhavayor jayanti madhurasmerālasā [dṛṣṭayaḥ*

Thus a poem we saw earlier to be emblematic of Jayadeva's otherworldliness

is equally emblematic of his worldliness and professional position at the Sena court.

Many of Lakṣmaṇasena's erotic miniature word paintings also bear a comprehensive similarity to verses in the anthologies ascribed to Jayadeva. The similarity restricts itself not to wording or image but extends to the design of the verse as a whole. The following two verses, the first by Jayadeva, the second by Lakṣmaṇasena, are found in the *Śṛṅgārapravāha*, "erotic current," of the *Sad.*

860
harati ratipater nitambabimba-
stanataṭacaṅkramasaṃkramasya lakṣmīm/
trivalibhavataraṅganimnanābhī-
hradapadavīm adhi romarājir asyāḥ//

The streak of hair on the path to the deep pond of her navel, which inclines into the waves of her abdomen's triple crease, abducts the majesty of Love's sinuous journeys over sloping breast-banks and buttock-globes.

883
ekapriyācaraṇapadmaparīṣṭijāta-
kleśasya me hṛdayam uttaralīcakāra/
udbhinnanirbharamanobhavabhāvamugdha-
nānāṅganāvadanacandramasāṃ didṛkṣā//

I had been pained by absorption in the lotus-foot of a single lady, and then the desire to see the moonlight of multiple women's faces dazed by the feeling of complete awakened love, caused my heart to quake.

Both verses weave a dense web of image and staccato alliteration that is suddenly made a complete sentence by the final words that introduce the subject. In each case, the third quarter consists of a long compound that spills into the fourth quarter. The verses have nothing like a definitive relationship; such a structure is hardly unique to them. They are similar, though, in both rhythm and concept, and one could go on making these sorts of comparisons from other examples.

The *Gītagovinda* presents other definite indications of its immediate social context. *Gītagovinda* 11.22 concludes with the phrase:

Why are you agitated about this man bowing at your lotus-feet like a slave purchased with a mere droplet of your darting eyebrow's majesty?

bhrūkṣepalakṣmīlavakrīte dāsa ivopasevita padāmbhoje kutaḥ saṃbhramaḥ//

A verse by Govardhana (*Sad.* 513) echoing the phrasing and the sentiment ends with the words:

> When the mere pulsing of your eyes' edges, trembling like the sea of milk, has purchased this man as your slave, why do you check your excitement?
>
> *kṣīrodacañcaladṛgañcalapātamātraiḥ*
> *krīte jane ka iva saṃbhramasaṃnirodhaḥ//*

It is evident that the writers of this court were in conversation, hearing or reading each other's works and composing in a manner that registered this. The immediate horizon for the poets' productions was the Sena salon; their intertextuality and mutual resonance present them as a cohesive group, a first horizon of transmission.

Whereas a comparison of the *Gītagovinda* with some of Jayadeva's other poems might initially suggest a radically different context for the two bodies of work, there is clearly enough evidence to see them as intimately intertwined, a product of the same sociopolitical-literary system. The *Gītagovinda*'s third verse reflexively emphasizes the poem's situatedness as well, sketching the contours of the salon in which it was composed.

> Umāpatidhara makes words blossom and Jayadeva alone knows the perfection of verbal arrangement. Śaraṇa deserves praise for his deftness in abstruse compositions. Govardhana has no rival for his crafting of true subjects of supreme erotic sentiment. Dhoyī, who commits speech to memory on once hearing it, is king of poets.[38]

The *Gītagovinda* was an immediately political poem but in a manner not nearly as obvious as the martial verses found in the *Saduktikarṇāmṛta*. This fact exposes another level of the connection between the seemingly opposed registers so characteristic of Sena poetry. In Jayadeva's two bodies of work, for example, we could trace two distinct types of sexuality, which could be termed (1) the personal/mystical sexual (of the *Gītagovinda*), which focuses on pining for the god-lover, and (2) the political sexual (of the *Saduktikarṇāmṛta*), which superimposes sexual and military conquest on to each other, though we can also find partial overlap.[39] Thus the Jayadeva of the *Saduktikarṇāmṛta* and the Jayadeva of the *Gītagovinda* can be seen to be one and at once somehow not the same.

This sort of contradiction may be the essence of Sena literature and may reflect this literature's immediate commensurability with political history

in the period under consideration. Internal contradiction was cultivated and negotiated as a response or anticipation, a displacement, or a way to represent and cope with the real grand, governing contradiction between sovereignty and its absence that haunted the Sena polity and many regional polities at the beginning of the thirteenth century. It is in the context of this contradiction becoming acutely material, in the form of the invasion of Muhammud Bakhtiyar Khalji (A.H. 601 1205 CE), which the compilation of the Sena anthology seems to have preceded by a mere two months, that we must ultimately understand the profound and shocking dynamism of the Sena archive. The political context was, as I have argued elsewhere, immanent to state poetry.[40] Thus the elite-popular negotiation of Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda* is also a moment of the Sena state's cultural populism. The political crisis was destructive of something, but it was productive of something else: a whole new perspective on literary registers and the imagination of social life that underlies them.

Notes

[1] Keith 1928, 194

[2] Kosambi 1957: 54.

[3] Benjamin 1977: 44.

[4] Virtually every scholar to study the *Gītagovinda* has called it something different in terms of its genre category. Keith and several other scholars identified it with the Bengali *Yātrā* (Keith 1928: 194). Raghavan suggested it be identified with a type called the *citrarāgakāvya* (1963: 549). Macdonell said it represented a "transitional stage between pure lyric and pure drama" (1965: 290). Tieken most recently identifies it as a combination of two forms enumerated in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the *lāsya* and the *catuṣpadā* (2001: 194). I think it is fair to call these results inconclusive.

[5] Thus the *Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta* (fourth century CE), by Hariṣena, is often referred to as an example of the *campū* genre (see, e.g. Salomon 1998: 236). Professor Michael Hahn has recently discovered a work which he belives pushes the date of the *campū* genre back much earlier than previously thought. (Hahn, personal comm. and forthcoming.)

[6] *jayadevādibhis tu gītagovindādiprabandheṣu sakalasahṛdayasaṃmato'yaṃ samayo madonmattamataṅgajair iva bhinna iti na tannidarśanenedānīntanena tathā varṇayituṃ sāṃpratam/...rateḥ saṃbhogarūpāyā manuṣyeṣv ivottamadevatāsu sphūṭīkṛtasakalānubhāvavarṇanam anucitam/* (*Rasagaṅgādhara*, 52.)

[7] Gary Tubb has discussed the traditional negotiation of the problem of depicting divine sexuality in commentaries on the *Kumārasaṃbhava* (1984: 233–34).

[8] Govardhana's *Āryāsaptaśatī* deals at length with the contrast and contradiction between urban and rural settings. A comic verse, for example, points out the context sensitivity of the tropes of urbane Sanskrit eroticism.

> Straighten your gait. Leave off, girlfriend, all your urban ways. Here, thinking you a witch, the village head will beat you just for casting crooked glances.
>
> *ṛjunā nidhehi caraṇau parihara sakhi nikhilanāgarācāram/*
> *iha ḍākiṇīti pallīpatiḥ kaṭākṣe 'pi daṇḍayati// (140)*

[9] On "cosmopolitan" and " vernacular" traditions in South Asia, see especially Pollock 1998, 2000, and most recently 2007.

[10] Freud 1961: 61.

[11] Singh 2003.

[12] See Keith 1928; Chatterji 1942; Kosambi 1957; and, more recently, Singh 2003.

[13] Chattopadhyaya 1882. Jayadeva is referred to as "Jayadeva *gosvāmī*" both in the introduction to Mukhopadhyay's edition, published in 1957, and in a 1999 article by D. N. Chakrabarti.

[14] See *Rasagaṅgādhara* (Kāvyamālā 1888: 45–46) for his refutation of *bhaktirasa*.

[15] Unfortunately it is not possible to determine the exact date or provenance, but it likely dates to the fifteenth or sixteenth century.

[16] *umāpatidharanāmā lakṣmaṇasenāmātyo vācaḥ pallavayati vistārayati/ tathā comāpatidharasya vāṅmādhūryaśūnyaṃ śabdārthaguṇaśūnyaṃ sacitrākhyam adhamakāvyaṃ na sahṛdayahṛdayāhlādajanakam iti bhāvaḥ/ śaraṇanāmā kavir durūhasya kāvyasya śīghraracane ślāghyaḥ stutyaḥ/ tathā ca śaraṇakaver api gūḍhārthatvādidoṣayuktaṃ prasādādiguṇarahitaṃ … tathā śṛṅgārottareti śṛṅgārarasa evottaraḥ śreṣṭho yatra śṛṅgāreṇottaraṃ pradhānaṃ vā … tasya racanaiḥ kavitāyāṃ granthanair ācāryagovardhanaspardhī govardhanācāryeṇa saha spardhāvān ko 'pi na viśruto na khyātaḥ/ atra śṛṅgāretyādinā śṛṅgārarasapradhān-akāvyaracanāyām eva tasya sāmarthyam/ rasāntaravarṇane tu so 'py aprauḍha … itaravidyādhyayanādinācāryatvaṃ satkāvyaracanāyām aprayojakam iti sopahāsam uktam ācāryeti/ tathā ca sa na satkavir nāpi satkavihṛdayaṃ tasyeti bhāvaḥ/ … śrutidharaḥ śrutiḥ śravaṇaṃ tanmātrād eva granthagrāhī/ tasyoccāritamātragrāhitvam eva … girāṃ vacasāṃ sandarbhaśuddhiṃ guṇālaṅkārasampannagrantharacanā viśeṣaṃ jayadeva jānīte eva nānyaḥ. ato 'nyakāvyaśravaṇe tathā na santoṣo yathā jayadevakavitāśravaṇenety etad eva śrotavyam iti bhāvaḥ/*

[17] On Amar Chitra Katha, see Chandra, 2008.

[18] The series first aired on November 13, 2005.

[19] Countless verses by Jayadeva from the Sena anthology *Saduktikarṇāmṛta* delight in orgiastic evocations of bloodshed, for example, the following stunning poem.

> Clusters of waves of arrows shoot forth and crash into hosts of rutting elephants; they tumble down and seem like islands in the ocean of the blood of his enemies. Ghoul-ladies lay atop them after sex with their lovers and drink blood-wine from shared goblets, using pairs of the nostrils of elephant trunks as straws. (1564)

[20] Stella Sandahl-Forgue scanned all the meters, noting that one of them corresponds to the Bengali *Payar* (Sandahl-Forgue 1977). Inquiry into the *Gītagovinda*'s meters has otherwise pretty much met a dead end.

[21] Beare 1957: chap. 25.

[22] Gerow 1989: 552.

[23] We can also include here the poem's strong tendency to detach verbal prefixes (*upasarga*) from their usual position, effectively using them like vernacular prepositions and postpositions.

[24] Kaviraj mentions the possibility of reading some of Jayadeva's verses as Bengali, especially where locative singular endings, repetitively layered in the songs, overlap between the two languages (2003: 512).

[25] Tieken mentions the signatory verse as a distinctive feature of early Tamil *bhakti* poetry, which certainly antedates the *Gītagovinda* (2001: 191 and chap. 10).

[26] *dekhoṃ mo tor phūlaśarīre/*
gāila caṇḍīdās bāsalībare//

[27] Tieken, 2001: chap. 10.

[28] Pollock 1998.

[29] David Smith made a good case for this in the third chapter of his *Haravijaya: An Introduction to the Sanskrit Court Epic* (1985).

[30] See Lienhard 1983: 209. I do not include *Purāṇa*-s with literary pretensions, like the *Bhāgavata* or *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, in my definition of *kāvya*, though one could perhaps consider these as literary treatments approaching *kāvya* status.

[31] Freud 1957: 244.

[32] *kaṃsārir api saṃsāravāsanābandhaśṛṅkhalām/*
rādhām ādhāya hṛdaye tatyāja vrajasundarīḥ// (3.1)

[33] *ratigṛhajaghane vipulāpaghane manasijakanakāsane/*
maṇimayarasanaṃ toraṇahasanaṃ vikirati kṛtavāsane// (7.3.5)

[34] Compare the following verses from the *Āryāsaptaśatī*.

> Causing intense trembling, probing inside, intensely hard, you make her ring out like a pin inside a bell.
>
> *aticāpalaṃ vitanvan antar niviśan nikāmakāṭhinyaḥ/*
> *mukharayasi svayam etāṃ sadvṛttāṃ śankur iva ghaṇṭām//* (6)
>
> Pressing into her ample inner-thigh and crotch, and playing at forming the hand into an elephant trunk [with the middle finger protruding], just like an elephant butting against a dry riverbank, eroticism/a design of red paint adorns you.
>
> *lagnaṃ jaghane tasyāḥ suviśāle kalitakarikarakrīḍe/*
> *vapre saktaṃ dvipam iva śṛṅgāras tvāṃ vibhūṣayati//* (505)

[35] *meghair meduram ambaraṃ vanabhuvaḥ śyāmās tamāladrumair*
naktaṃ bhīrur ayaṃ tvam eva tad imaṃ rādhe gṛhaṃ prāpaya/
ithaṃ nandanideśataś calitayoḥ pratyadhvakuñjadrumaṃ
rādhāmādhavayor jayanti yamunākūle rahaḥ kelayaḥ// (1.1)

[36] On *rasābhāsa*, see the essay by Levitt in this volume.

[37] See note 19.

[38] *vācaḥ pallavayaty umāpatidharaḥ sandarbhaśuddhiṃ girāṃ*
jānīte jayadeva eva śaraṇaḥ ślāghyo durūhadrute/

śṛṅgārottarasatprameyaracanair ācārya govardhana-
spardhī ko 'pi na viśrutaḥ śrūtidharo dhoyī kavikṣmāpatiḥ// (1.3)

[39] There are many verses by Jayadeva in the anthology that juxtapose sexual and military conquest. An especially evocative example is the following *śleṣa* (bitextual verse), in which conquest and sexual intercourse are superimposed on each other and expressed through the very same words. The names of the conquered dynasties have useful double meanings *Aṅga*: body/limb, *Kuntala:* lock of hair, *Cola*: blouse, *Kāñci* (a major city of the Cola empire) waistgirdle

> "You play at making blouses slip and shake / at making the Colas tremble. You pull on locks of hair / you torment the Kuntalas. You manage to bring down the girdle / you triumph in bringing about the fall of Kāñci. You fiercely confront the Aṅgas / you have intercourse passionately." Thus, lord of kings, the eulogies of your bards today give rise to deep trembling; the hearts of both your women and your enemies leap up to worship your feet. (1445)

[40] Knutson, 2010 and forthcoming.

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PART THREE

The Vernacular and the Cosmopolitan

7

Insiders, Outsiders, and the Tamil Tongue

Blake Wentworth

In the shift that Sheldon Pollock traces from a Sanskrit cosmopolis to the vernacularization of the literary in India, Tamil presents a special—and especially challenging—case. The vexing date of *caṅkam* (academy) literature; the disputed antiquity of the *poruḷatikāram* (field of poetry's significance) of *Tolkāppiyam*, Tamil's first extant treatment of the poetic norms that govern this literature; the involved taxonomies of *akam* (interior) and *puṟam* (exterior) that these poetic norms dictate, which reveal no clear trace of Sanskrit's own explorations of poetic form: at the very least, early Tamil literature presses us to recognize it as a language apart. Of course, the conversation is far from over, and history may not bear this out. At the level of textual history, however, the idea that Tamil wordsmiths crafted a vision of the literary that has no parallel in other Indian vernaculars emerges with impressive clarity.

This essay takes up the case of Tamil exceptionalism by discussing textual moments when the language marked the identities of its speakers. Does speaking Tamil, that is to say, mean being Tamil? The question takes on added interest given Pollock's own spirited critique of linguism in his masterwork, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, in which he rejects the equation of language affinity with group identity:

> There are a number of basic conceptions, derived from Western experience, about language as a social fact that seem problematic in light of the data on culture and power in South Asia gathered in these pages… Foremost among these conceptions is the conviction that language is a core factor, or even *the* core factor, in social group identification, one that focalizes the group's emotional energy to a peculiar or even unique degree. Indeed, one might even say that for much social theory, language is assumed to be the object of a kind of cultural political cathexis. (2006: 505)

For the past two centuries, the history of Tamil literary scholarship has been inseparable from the question of what it means to be Tamil. Be it a worthy guide or a truculent champion, language now stands at the heart of Tamil character. How much of this, we may ask with Pollock, is really new?

Is a Tamil identity grounded in language a construction of modernity, reified without warrant as a timeless hallmark of selfhood, or in this, as well, is Tamil different?

Tamil Calls to the Tamil Soul: The Recent Past

In 1891, a Tamil drama took to the stage of linguism as though it had been built expressly for its performance. The text was Pe. Cuntaram Piḷḷai's *Maṉōṉmaṇīyam*, and its publication marked the first time in Tamil literary history that poetic verses addressed themselves to a people as a whole (Bate 2005: 480); a people, moreover, that the text sought to unite in reverence for their language. As the six famous lines of its prologue declare, giving worship to the Tamil tongue:

> Circled by the liquid sea, maiden earth
> has shining Bharata as a wholesome face, awash in beauty,
> her bright, gentle brow, graced with a fragrant *tilaka*
> are the South and the wholesome Dravidian land,
> and you, splendid goddess Tamil, are like that *tilaka's* scent
> spreading fame everywhere, filling the entire world with joy![1]

In 1970, these words were elevated to the status of officially sanctioned prayer by the state's ruling party, the Tirāviṭa Muṉṉēṟṟak Kaḻakam (Symposium for Dravidian Progress or DMK), a rather unsurprising fact given the DMK's use of Tamil as an effective instrument for forging political sanction (Kailasapathy 1979: 26; Ramaswamy 1997: 17–18). We should note, however, that *Maṉōṉmaṇīyam* was by no means new when the DMK came on the scene, having been written almost sixty years before the party's formation in 1949. Long before Tamil was laid on the altar of an independent nation-state, the language had become the signal marker in a broader struggle for Dravidian identity (Sivathamby 1986: 50–51). Cuntaram Piḷḷai's drama was a crystallizing instance of this process of distinction, and it was forged in opposition to a hypostatized Aryan oppressor. Continuing beyond the verse just cited, the prologue extends its devotion to Goddess Tamil by laying out the stakes quite clearly.

> Like that one primal matter which remains as it was before
> even as many souls and many worlds are created, borne, and destroyed,
> though there are many,
> Kannada, joyous Telugu, graceful Malayalam, and Tulu,
> One rises forth from your womb,
> as turns of phrase like the Aryan tongue pass on and fade away,

> enchanted by your vibrant youth, we worship you, amazed![2]

The hallmark of beauty on this woman is Dravidian, and Tamil is what makes her known to the world, constant and ever new even as Sanskrit fades into the past.

The appeal to Tamil as the touchstone of Dravidian authenticity was powerfully expressed in the literary world through the rise of the *taṉittamiḻ* (Pure Tamil) movement and its stalwart proponent, Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ. The *aṭikaḷ* (renunciate), who in his youth had known Cuntaram Piḷḷai as an elder contemporary, launched the *taṉittamiḻ* movement in 1915 as a campaign to expunge Sanskrit influence from Tamil letters. Although it resulted, at least to my nonnative ears, in a fairly tedious, monochrome style of expression, the *taṉittamiḻ* movement did imbue contemporary agitations against Brahmin societal dominance with a notable literary dimension. The positive valence of Tamil had found its Other with the capital *O*, the Aryan Brahman, who lacked an authenticity that a heritable, exclusive relationship with the Tamil language was argued to confer. For Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ, this was a battle to be waged at the level of the lexeme. As his 1939 study *Ancient and Modern Tamil Poets* declares:

> Writers of over 1800 years ago were careful to practice the art of writing in pure, well-chosen, simple and virile Tamil words. They would not weaken its strength and get themselves demoralized by indiscriminately admitting into its fold any extraneous word... A language loses its vitality if it is needlessly and thoughtlessly corrupted. So also a class of people becomes disintegrated and weak by harmful admixture. That the one strong well-knit group of Tamils has, by corruption of their language, become the disjointed and decaying groups of Malayalees, Telugus, etc. is a sufficient testimony to this truth. According to the census of 1911 those speaking the Dravidian languages numbered about sixty millions. If these had only fostered their Tamil tongue without disintegrating it by reckless admixture of Sanskrit words, they would not have been so deplorably divided into separate groups each unable to understand the other as if they had been aliens. The great and deserving merit of the Tamilians is that, for more than fifty centuries, they have used their language with great care and vigilance and kept it so pure and undefiled, that we who are their descendents are enabled to speak now almost the same language they spoke then and derive the same enjoyment they had of productions of our own age. (1939: 18–19)

For Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ, as it had been for Cuntaram Piḷḷai, the real champion of Tamil identity—and the reason, as his dismissive view of Malayalam and Telugu spells out quite clearly, that Dravidian essentially

means Tamil—was the collection of the language's earliest texts, collectively known as *caṅkam* literature. As the *aṭikaḷ* was to write in his autumn years, citing these texts as evidence:

> Unequalled in their quest for knowledge and their industry, the ancestors of our Tamil people surpassed the peoples of all other ancient civilizations. In addition to the valuable revelations provided by the ancient texts and verses composed by the best among them, who shone as lyric poets, the work of Western [lit. "English"] scholars who have objectively researched this history, as well as the objective research of our own Indian scholars, makes this patently obvious.[3]

To those committed to an exclusivist model of Dravidian authenticity, the prestige of an independent and ancient Tamil culture was substantiated through the *caṅkam* texts, whose recovery, editing, and—most importantly—printing had recently been inaugurated by the herculean efforts of Ci. Vai. Tāmōtara Piḷḷai and U. Vē. Cāminātaiyar. The caricatured Aryan, whom Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ would call out at every turn, was not invited to take part.

> There are those scholars who lack the patience to see the truth—established through valid proof—that the ancient Tamils excelled in civilization from the very beginning, and that they were the ones who civilized all other ancient peoples. They are under the impression that the Tamils were civilized by Aryans, a belief spread at every turn by people who have done no actual research. Such scholars . . . who seem to believe the familiar canard that Aryan civilization was the sole cause for world civilization are contradicted by all valid proof![4]

As K. Sivathamby has described the ethos of the time, "in this whole struggle for the acceptance of the historicity and the cultural individuality of the Tamils as a language-culture group, it was Tamil literature more than anything else that was called on to establish the antiquity and achievements of the Tamils" (1986: 51). The fabled tale of *caṅkam* literature's recovery after a long period of cultural amnesia must have resonated powerfully with Tamil literati, for whom such conditions of textual production were deeply familiar. For Tamil Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas alike, the defining works of their religious traditions were produced by similarly dramatic acts of textual recovery, whose miraculous nature both revealed the texts' heavenly dispensation and affirmed their imperviousness to the ravages of time.[5]

The use of *caṅkam* literature to resurrect the society it depicted went far beyond the efforts of Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ, whose own efforts to purify the Tamil language never garnered much in the way of imitation. The spate of Tamil

literary histories that began to come out in the late 1920s forcefully advanced a Tamil identity on the basis of language, and given the spirit of the times, generally developed this premise in terms of race. As M. S. Purnalingam Pillai maintains on the opening page of his 1929 examination primer, *Tamil Literature*, "the literature of the Tamil race is a record in suitable form of language and its emotions, thoughts and volitions, and of its observations, ideas and actions. It is ancient, vast and essentially moral and religious" (1929: 1). And so it was with successors, from K. N. Sivaraja Pillai's *The Chronology of the Early Tamils* (1932) to the Jesudasans' *A History of Tamil Literature* (1961).[6] That such histories were written in English might seem ironic on the face of it, but in fact it points to the real conditions of their production. Tamil speakers were not operating in a monolingual environment, as indeed they never had. They were responding, moreover, to the perceived denigration of their history by Western scholarship, which in its valorization of Sanskrit textuality failed to appreciate Dravidian achievements. The vision of Tamilness they presented to this broader world, ranging over literary classics such as *Maṉōṉmaṇīyam* to bookish histories, was suffused with language devotion. For many, *caṅkam* verses seemed a revelatory key to the society that they described, and the heights this society attained spoke most persuasively on behalf of the call to recognize Tamil cultural dignity. The Tamil language had assumed a visionary mantle, but one that gazed proudly back in order to move forward.

Place this state of affairs against Pollock's critique of a generalized linguism, and his appraisal holds up well. His position is a strong one:

> The fact is, the affective attachment that produces linguism—or that can be deployed to produce the illusion of linguism—and all the associated varieties of social-political belonging based on language are not universal features of human existence at all. There is no evidence whatever for linguism in South Asia before modernity. (2006: 508)

Maṉōṉmaṇīyam, as has often been observed, arose in the wake of Caldwell's *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages* (1856), which did much to contrast Brahmins with those whom Caldwell termed "native Tamilians." This could arguably be singled out as the first textual articulation of a collective Tamil identity to assume an ethnic hue, advanced as a function of language. Yet should we move beyond *caṅkam* literature, and the cultural struggles in which it was most prominently wielded, I hope to refine Pollock's contention that before modernity, "people were simply bearers of language, they were not defined by language" (2006: 510), by exploring moments in early Tamil literature in which we find people making themselves

modern in just this way, trying to leave behind others whom they wished to commit to the past.

The *caṅkam* literature that proved such fertile soil for erecting a triumphalist Dravidian identity bears out Pollock's argument impressively. There is no evidence, as I shall argue, that in *caṅkam* verses "Tamil" refers to anything more than a language. Yet *caṅkam* literature's role as wellspring for the primacy of Tamil culture was in large part the result of the environment in which those texts were published, where claims to antiquity and independence from Sanskrit ruled the day. If we turn to other Tamil literary works, ones that did not align well with the non-Brahmin politics of the time because they spoke in praise of Brahmanic rituals and temple practice, I believe we find compelling evidence that the Tamil language indexed a cultural character. This essay is not comprehensive on this score, as I will focus on Śaiva materials, but even this brief glimpse of the situation reveals how the link between Tamil and a community has been made with an eye toward power, at times when Tamil was not simply what people spoke, but what they were, a way to establish who was ascendant and who was being cast aside.[7]

Caṅkam Tamil, *Caṅkam* Tamils?

We begin long before the rise of modern Tamil language affinity, a period that has enjoyed a relatively good amount of scholarly attention, and before seventeenth-century texts, such as *Tamiḻviṭutūtu* (Tamil Sent as Messenger), that uphold Tamil as a marker of identity in plain terms.[8] Prior to the tenth-century thesaurus *Piṅkalam*, moreover, where the word *Tamiḻ* is glossed as *iṉimai* (sweetness) and *nīrmai* (orderliness), *Tamiḻ* had no clearly demonstrated extension beyond the proper noun (*Piṅkalam* 10.580). There is no verbal root in the language from which the word is obviously derived, and attempts to provide an etymologically sound origin of the term involve acrobatics precarious enough to keep their conclusions tentative.[9] In its first regular occurrences in *caṅkam* poetry, the term *Tamiḻ* takes a specific referent, and the first task is to determine if it ever refers to anything beyond the language itself.

Although this seems a daunting task, it is not actually that trying, simply because the term occurs so rarely. In *Eṭṭuttokai*, the eight texts that comprise the accepted core of *caṅkam* literature, the word *Tamiḻ* occurs but eleven times. Within this diminutive range, it is regularly paired with the prefix *taṇ*, meaning "cool" or "pleasant." Such, for example, is the usage in *Patiṟṟuppattu* 63.9, *taṇṭamiḻ ceṟittu*, "having obstructed [those of] pleasant Tamil," whose use of the prefix *taṇ* leaves no doubt that the term *Tamiḻ* refers to the language that these (doubtlessly unpleasant) enemies speak.[10] In other cases in which

the word *Tamiḻ* is not preceded by *taṉ*, the situation is not so clear. *Akanāṉūṟu* 31.14–15 gives us the phrase *tamiḻ keḻu mūvar kākkum | moḻi peyar tēetta paṉ malai iṟantē*, "crossing the mountain range, to a land alien to the language the three Tamil kings protect." The challenge in reading *caṅkam* texts often lies in a highly elliptical syntax that demands real interpretive responsibility from its audience, creating Delphic moments of quandary for modern eyes.[11] Yet nothing here demands broadening the basic extension of the term supplied by *taṇṭamiḻ*, "the pleasant Tamil language." The term *mūvar* invariably refers to the three crowned kings of the region, Cēra, Cōḻa, and Pāṇṭiya; it has no need of the descriptive term *Tamiḻ* to achieve reference as a putative ethnonym. Given the clause's stress on a language that the *mūvar* protect, it seems wise to take the attribute *Tamiḻ* as identifying the language itself. What impresses instead is the royal protection of the language and what this might imply. At stake is royal involvement in the prescriptive conservation of a literary medium, an exceptionally early instance of this phenomenon for a *deśabhāṣā* (regional language) if the *caṅkam* literature's prevailing date in the early centuries CE is at all close.[12] Lacking clear-cut substantiation, however, this must remain an intriguing possibility.

A phrase such as *Akanāṉūṟu* 227:14, *tamiḻ akappaṭutta imiḻ icai muraciṉ*, "the roaring war drum made Tamil's own," introduces further complexities. The phrase seems to invoke Tamil as an abstraction of social character, which could subsume not just the drums of enemies but the people who wanted to take them. There is a fair amount that stands in the way of this interpretation, however. Let alone the rarity of the term *Tamiḻ* itself, nowhere else in *Eṭṭuttokai* do we find an explicit instance of such a usage, nor anywhere else, as far as I can discern, in the broad view of *caṅkam* literature that includes the later anthology *Pattuppāṭṭu*. More palpably, the telegraphic nature of the grammar in *caṅkam* verses lets the word comfortably refer to a Tamil-speaking commander, through a process of secondary signification (termed *ākupeyar* by the tradition) that is a regular feature of this poetry. The ambiguity here should not be minimized; such a phrase can indeed be taken to project Tamil as an important attribute of self or group. What I want to emphasize, however, is that nothing compels us to make this move, and imputing such a consequential abstraction to this single occurrence demands that it bear an awful lot. Even in the well-known case of *Puṟanāṉūṟu* 168.18, the only instance of the term *tamiḻakam* (the Tamil interior) in *caṅkam* literature, the verb that anchors this expression recommends taking the term *Tamiḻ* as language, no more. The phrase reads *vaiyaka varaippil tamiḻakam kēṭpa*, "so that the Tamil interior hears to the edge of the earth." Again, even granting the ambiguity, the word

Tamil̲ best serves by identifying how the message will be heard.

What gives all this a significance that extends beyond the texts themselves, with their inexorable questions of provenance and date, is their later compilation into anthologies by people who found them relevant to their own lives. Even without venturing to identify those who carried out this anthologizing work, the scant mention of Tamil in what we today know as the *caṅkam* texts suggests that "Tamilness" of any sort was not their concern. Of course there is no knowing what and precisely how much was discarded, but given what we have, the term's sparse use and insignificant role in developing the verses' themes speak forcefully against proposing it as any sort of organizing principle in the *caṅkam* texts' collation.

Tolkāppiyam, that lionized treatise on Tamil poetics, reveals no further broadening of the referent. In its section on poetry's subject matter, the *Poruḷatikāram*, where one might expect to find a discussion of how the term *Tamil̲* relates to the people the poetry describes, were it at issue, the word is not used. *Tolkāppiyam's* section on morphology, the *El̲uttatikāram*, employs the term just once, and obliquely at that, stating, *tamil̲ en̲ kiḷaviyum attan̲ ōrar̲r̲ē* (1.8.90), "the word 'Tamil' is of the same kind as that," thus establishing the rule that the inflectional increment *akku* may optionally intercede when the lexeme *Tamil̲* is placed in compound before a consonant-initial lexeme. This is pretty arcane stuff, so let us turn to the section on syntax, the *Collatikāram*, where the use of the term *Tamil̲* gives real weight to the view that it refers purely to language. Here we find the very first instance of the term *centamil̲* (proper Tamil). The issue at stake is the typification of different sorts of words, which *Tolkāppiyam* lists as standard, idiomatic, Sanskritic, and synonymous/homonymous. The definition of a standard word is given as follows: *avar̲r̲uḷ iyar̲col tāmē centamil̲ nilattu val̲akkoṭu civaṇi tam poruḷ val̲āmai icaikkum collē* (2.9.2), "among these [types], a standard word (*iyar̲col*) is a word that accords with usage in the land of proper Tamil, and preserves the integrity of its meaning in use." An idiom, by contrast, is defined in this way: *centamil̲ cērnta pan̲n̲iru nilattum tam kur̲ippin̲avē ticaiccol kiḷavi* (2.9.4), "An idiom is a word that assumes significance in [any of] the twelve areas identified with proper Tamil." In both cases, Tamil is related to place (*nilam*, cited obliquely as *nilattu*) because the language attributed to this place is proper, grammatically sanctioned. As Vaiyapuri Pillai pointed out, the term for this kind of Tamil, *centamil̲*, corresponds precisely with the term *saṃskṛta*, further discouraging the extension of the term *Tamil̲* in *Tolkāppiyam* to anything beyond language.[13] There were no Centamil̲ people any more than there were Sanskrit people; what *Tolkāppiyam* cared about was Tamil's literary worth and prestige.[14]

The great works that followed *caṅkam* literature do not meditate on what *Tamiḻ* means in any direct way. The didactic texts *Tirukkuṟaḷ* and *Nālaṭiyār*, for instance, make no mention of *Tamiḻ*, and given their exhaustive pedagogic thrust, ascribing this term to an educated understanding of self does not seem to have been an issue. In the textual shadows, however, glimmers of a more penetrating idea of Tamil do begin to arise. At first sight, the long narrative poems *Cilappatikāram* and *Maṇimēkalai*, which—taking a healthy reserve about date—may be placed in the second half of the first millennium, do not stray much from earlier usage. *Taṇṭamiḻ* still rules the day, as we observe in *Maṇimēkalai* 19.109, where we find the expression *taṇṭamiḻ viṉaiñar*, "workers [who speak] pleasant Tamil." Yet *Cilappatikāram* also starts to do something more, reminiscent of *Akanāṉūṟu's* description of the "language the three Tamil kings protect," when it further associates the word *Tamiḻ* with the men who had the power to assert its use.

Take, for instance, *Cilappatikāram* 26:161, *viruntiṉ maṉṉar . . . aruntamiḻ āṟṟal aṟintilar*. Taken literally, the phrase reads, "kings newly made, who did not know the might of elegant Tamil." Once more, the qualification of Tamil as elegant (*aru*) shows that language is at stake, with secondary signification at work to denote the king who speaks it. We appear to be on the same ground as *Akanāṉūṟu* 227.14, with its "roaring war drum made Tamil's own." With each repeated identification of this sort, however, in which language stands for the people who advance it over outsiders, the bond between language and the political order that conserves it is tightened. The understanding of language as a cohesive whole—a foundation on which discussion of literary merit is even possible—appears to be a labor completed, and at this point the glimmers in *caṅkam* literature that align this labor with kingship have become resounding echoes. As it successfully achieves reference, the Tamil language conditions the warring king in this passage; through the bond between the two, we find a veiled suggestion (if no more than that) that his royal station also conditions Tamil. His persona is the physical embodiment of a successful whole, not a scatter of expressions that has no edge. We might also note that in contrast to earlier usages of the word *Tamiḻ* in *caṅkam* literature, the phrase in question offers its audience an imagined sense of the outsiders' view. What they see is aggressive: Tamil, proud and conquering, the hallmark of those who would ruin them. Take the above phrase, for instance, in light of *Cilappatikāram* 25.165–67, where the Cēra king is informed, "If you have it in mind to turn the entire sea-girt earth into the Tamil country bounded by the roaring waters, there is no one to withstand you" (*imiḻkaṭal vēliyait tamiḻnāṭ' ākkiya | itu nī karutiṉai yāyiṉ ēṟpavar | mutunīr ulakiṉ muḻuvatum illai*). Tamil country (*tamiḻnāṭu*),

the land where Tamil is spoken, has come to involve far more than words. A cultural order is in effect here, and Tamil is its emblematic standard.

The Future Lies in a Tamil Past: Śiva and the Heartland

The roughly contemporaneous poetic treatise *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ* (also known as *Kaḷaviyal*) takes up this point and makes it its own. This text addresses what the Tamil literary tradition saw as its greatest treasure, the style of verse known as *akam* poetry, or what we could call "poetry of the heartland." The study of *akam* constitutes a good share of scholarly research on the language (and happily so, for it is good poetry), so let us limit the discussion of this vast subject to emphasize that *akam* was appreciated as unique, a literature with its own poetic conventions, which place high demands on a competent readership. Yet when the text's commentator, Nakkīraṉār, begins to describe this poetic world, he does not call it *akam*, choosing in its stead a far more evocative appellation. "Next, the subject matter," he declares, "which is to say the contents of the text. What does this book consider? It considers Tamil."[15]

Tamil is *akam,* and *akam* is Tamil, the world of the heartland, from a shared culture to the deepest levels of human feeling. This world, however, does not embrace everyone, for *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ* keeps some people out when it describes a literary tradition it takes as synonymous with Tamil itself. This is a Śaiva text, a point that is not separable from its discussion of poetry. As Nakkīraṉār tells it, the text's sixty *sūtras* on which he bases his commentary were composed by Śiva himself. The story is worth telling, for in it lies much to shed light on what Tamil represents, and to whom.

> In those days, the Pāṇṭiya country was afflicted with famine for twelve years. As hunger continued to worsen, the king summoned all learned men, and said, "Heed me, I can no longer sustain you, for my land suffers grievously. You must take refuge somewhere in a place familiar to you, and once the country returns to normal, remember me and come back." After they had taken their leave of the king and set off, twelve years passed without incident, and fertile rains once more fell upon the land. The king dispatched men far and wide, telling them to bring back the scholars now that the country had returned to normal. The king's men found scholars competent in the fields (*atikāram*, Sanskrit *adhikāra*) of morphology, syntax, and prosody, but when they returned, they said that they could not find anyone competent in the field of poetry's significance (*poruḷatikāram*) anywhere at all. The king was overcome with worry, and said, "There is no point in studying the fields of morphology, syntax, and prosody except in service of the field of poetry's significance! If I cannot acquire that, acquiring the others gains me nothing!"

> And he went to the temple in Maturai to meditate on the god who is red as fire.
>
> "This is terrible," thought the god, "the king is consumed with worry! But since his worry is centered on knowledge, I shall put an end to it." And he inscribed the sixty verses of this text on three copper plates, and placed them under his throne.

The story continues as a Brahmin, divinely guided by Śiva's hand, chances on the plates and recognizes them for what they are.

> Seeing them, the Brahmin thought "Our Lord must have made these, knowing how worried the king is because he lacks the field of poetry's significance." Instead of returning home, he went to the main gate of the palace and presented himself to the door wardens. The king called for him to enter, and the Brahmin came forward to show him the plates. After the king took them and looked them over, he exclaimed, "Here is the field of poetry's significance! Our Lord must have made this after seeing me so despondent," and he turned in the direction of the temple and worshipped.[16]

This rich passage marks a turning point in Tamil literary history. Land and literature are mapped onto each other, as the country must thrive for its literature to be sustained by its masters. Once the famine has passed, and the land has returned to normal—literally, once the "country has become a country" (*nāṭu nāṭāyiṟṟu*)—making cultural attainment possible, the king earnestly seeks to regain his scholars. But the linchpin has been lost, for the *poruḷatikāram*, the proper significance of Tamil entire, has not been regained, and the formal features of the Tamil language, from the articulation of its words to the variety of meters, lie impotent. This poor state of affairs, the tale stresses, is not ancillary to royal obligation, for the king is absolutely bereft (*puṭaipaṭak kavaṉṟu*). He proceeds to his own lord, Śiva, to worship, and the god graciously bestows the requisite verses through the mediation of a Brahmin servant: a heavenly king maintaining his subordinate, through the proper intermediary, so that Tamil itself is preserved. Fragmentary on its own, each act joins to create a cohesive whole, binding literature, country, king, and god to a Tamil nexus that magnifies them all.

A struggle for cultural identity, loss and recovery, written texts discovered: we have seen this pattern before in the press to establish a robust Dravidian identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when *caṅkam* poetry assumed such a pivotal role. And just as this modern campaign sought to excise the Aryan Brahmin from any participation in Dravidian authenticity, *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ*'s early tale of cultural peril and glorious resolution also

had its Other, totally cut out from the tale but quite visible from the shadows. Once the Pāṇṭiya king has recovered the *porulatikāram*, he seeks its correct interpretation from a conference of scholars, a *caṅkam* (Sanskrit *saṅgha*), which, as the text informs us, studied Tamil in Maturai for 1,850 years.[17] This is the final *caṅkam* of three, convened under the patronage of the Pāṇṭiya kings. The prior two reach back to an antediluvian past, in cities that "the sea took" (*kaṭal koṇṭatu*); prominent members of the first were Agastya (author of the first Tamil grammar, lost to the extant tradition), Śiva's son Murukaṉ, and "the god with fanning dreadlocks, who burned the triple city" (*tiripuram eritta viricaṭaik kaṭavuḷ*), Śiva himself. This is the *caṅkam*, *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ* declares, that produced what we today know as the *Eṭṭuttokai*: *caṅkam* literature. But the term *caṅkam*, as has regularly been observed, was not first associated with a literary conference, particularly one that produced its masterpieces with a fideistic dependence on Śiva. *Saṅghas* were Jain, or Buddhist, and it is Jains in particular who are credited with writing some of the most renowned works of early Tamil literature, including grammar (*Tolkāppiyam*), didactic verse (*Tirukkuṟaḷ*), and long poetic narrative (*Cilappatikāram*). Here they are thrown aside, for Jains have no part in *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ*'s sense of Tamil, cleanly placed in the Śaiva fold. In this tale, the "our" in "our Lord" is not an idle gesture: it calls to an audience who would know who was in and who was out.

Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ erases the Jains from view; its *sūtras* were the work of Śiva, and its exemplary verses, the *Pāṇṭik Kōvai*, praise Neṭumāṟaṉ, the Pāṇṭiya king held to have been converted from Jainism to Śaivism by the great saint Ñānacampantar. As for Nakkīraṉār's commentary, let us continue with the story, where we find the members of the *caṅkam* unable to ascertain the true meaning of Śiva's verses. Perplexed, they appeal to the god for help.

> They said, "Didn't the god with lustrous dreadlocks, who lives in the temple, compose these *sūtras*?" So they went and prostrated themselves before him, hoping he would give them a judge as a boon. At midnight, the voice that rings through the three folds of time gave its agreement, saying, "A boy named Uruttiracaṉmaṉ, the son of Uppūri Kuṭi Kiḻār, lives in this town. He is a bright-eyed child with lank hair, five years old, and he is mute. Do not scorn him for that, but take him and place him on the throne. When a *sūtra* is explained in his presence, his eyes will flow with tears and his body will quiver if the correct explanation is heard; if the explanation is mistaken, he will remain impassive. He is the god Kumāra, who was born in that body because of a curse . . ."
>
> When Nakkīraṉār, the son of Kaṇakkāyaṉār, gave his explanation, every

word made the boy's tears flow and his body quiver, and they shouted, "We have obtained the true explanation of the text!"[18]

The Tamil Country: Maturai Poems

A text that professes to lay down rules for literary success is one thing, of course, and a work of literature another. The choices made by people who care about words shape what counts as literature more than blunt prescription, and I think it fair to say that successful prescriptive texts understand this quite well. I profess no exhaustive knowledge of Tamil's literary masterpieces, but it is quite impressive how major texts in the Tamil literary tradition confirm *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ*'s view of Tamil: a vehicle of cultural authenticity bounded by religion. I would like to take two texts as cases in point, *Paripāṭal* (Tender Songs) and *Muttoḷḷāyiram* (Nine Hundred Verses on the Three Kings), both of which rest in the penumbra of *akam* poetry. These texts have enigmatic histories, but my reticence to assign them a specific date will not, I hope, preclude worthwhile analysis, for both inhabit a literary vein that *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ* helps locate.

These texts predate *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ*, if not by much. *Paripāṭal* is one of the texts in the *Eṭṭuttokai*, named by *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ* as a product of the final *caṅkam* (though in style and theme it is clearly later than other texts in this anthology). Both *Paripāṭal* and *Muttoḷḷāyiram* employ a rare coinage, "threefold Tamil", the first occasions of this term in the literary record.[19] "Threefold Tamil" designates literature (*iyal*), music (*icai*), and the performing arts (*nāṭakam*); its relevance is thrown into question by the fact that no specimens of the latter two fields exist, which makes the inclusion of this term in both texts all the more representative of a shared literary environment. Thematically, they both laud deities who, like the Śiva of *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ*, bear a Brahmanic imprimatur but also have a noticeably southern character: *Paripāṭal* praises Cevvēḷ (Murukaṉ, an ancient Tamil god who becomes identified with Skanda) and Tirumāl (a Tamil god identified with Viṣṇu), while *Muttoḷḷāyiram* praises Śiva, Murukaṉ, and a southern rendering of Kṛṣṇa.[20] And perhaps most important, all three texts share an abiding interest in the Pāṇṭiya country centered around Maturai.[21]

In one of its paeans to Murukaṉ, *Paripāṭal* refers to Tamil in a way that powerfully resonates with *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ*'s blending of Śaivism and the literary. Speaking of the god's mountain abode at Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, just outside of Maturai, the hymn proclaims, "Those who have never studied pleasant Tamil, whose significance endures, do not gain the reward of this mountain."[22] The Tamil described here, *taḷḷāp poruḷiyalpiṟ ṟaṇṭamiḻ*, is

precisely what the Pāṇṭiya king of *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ* was so desperate to recover, a Tamil that has *poruḷiyalpu*, a definitive significance (i.e. *poruḷatikāram*). But what reward does Murukan's mountain confer on those who have this Tamil? The thirteenth-century commentator Parimēlaḻakar interprets this phrase as follows: "The men who do not study Tamil, which possesses an established significance involving this kind of sex, will not grasp the ways of clandestine love."[23] This reading focuses on the role of the mountain slopes in *akam* poetry's figurative scheme, the secluded domain of the *kuṟiñci* flower where premarital affairs take place. The men who do not know that, Parimēlaḻakar argues, will not know their joys. This illuminating reading sets the knowledge of *akam* poetic theory against real-world ability, a vivid alignment of theory and practice in which having Tamil conditions what you can be. Should we be bold enough to differ with Parimēlaḻakar, however, we might take the "reward of this mountain" as an allusion not just to clandestine love, but to Murukaṉ himself. The god is the soul of this hymn, the sum and substance of the mountain where human love carries on its way. We have, if we accept this relationship, a beautiful confluence, where Tamil, fully realized in the conventions of *akam* poetry, grants pleasure, which is itself a revelation of Murukaṉ's divine favor. Like the tale of Tamil poetry's recovery and authoritative exposition in *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ*, Tamil connotes an involved cultural synthesis with a religious apex.

The mentions of Tamil in *Muttoḷḷāyiram* do not make similarly overt appeals to the literary, but they are nonetheless suggestive. Consider a verse in praise of the Pāṇṭiya king, here called by the royal title Māṟaṉ, and how it aligns the use of Tamil with the worship of Murukaṉ.

> The song I sing, using lovely Tamil,
> for Māṟaṉ, his gleaming spear full of victory
> shining as it holds fast in advancing battle
> is like the *kaṭampa* flower offered in the day's worship
> to the youth who rides an unyielding peacock.[24]

Tamil is the right way to praise, just as the *kaṭampa* flower is the right flower to give to Murukaṉ, the youthful god (so much so that Murukaṉ is also known as Kaṭampaṉ). Tamil words give a lord public affirmation of fidelity to—and participation in—his dominant stature, the marked testament of involvement in a distinct sociopolitical order. When this order is realized, and Māṟaṉ sits at the axis of a flourishing land where all its parts are being played correctly, everything is as it should be, and no rival can hope to touch it.

Pure gold in the earth
Threefold works of Tamil in the towns
White conches and pearls in the waters
Elephants on the mountain slopes

The chest of a garlanded king
on the honed spear of conquering Māraṉ.[25]

Tamil, this verse urges, is as organic to this blooming world as its natural treasures, and just as emblematic.

Śiva and the Tamil Masters

Retaining our focus on Tamil Śaivism, we conclude with a brief look at poems from three of the great leaders of the faith (*nāyaṉmār*), Ñānacampantar, Nāvukkaracar, and Cuntaramūrtti, names usually shortened, respectively, to Campantar, Appar (father), and Cuntarar. Their hymns compose the anthology *Tēvāram*, and singing them has been an essential feature of Śiva worship in Tamilnadu since at least the tenth century CE. They spring from a time when the flickers of religious practice evident in *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ*, *Paripāṭal*, and *Muttoḷḷāyiram* had become powerful social forces, and the saints sing exultantly of the thrilling presence of Śiva in temples set throughout the Tamil heartland. In his praise of the temple at Maṟaikkāṭu (Sanskrit "Vedāraṇya"), Appar sings:

He seemed to you like pounding water,
a god with a body of raging fire
robust as a brimming lake
cultivating joy for loving devotees,
you saw an Aryan, a Tamil,
our Lord who lives on Aṇṇāmalai
like an elephant pouring with rut,
the bridegroom himself
home in Maṟaikkāṭu.[26]

We find here a most interesting description of Śiva, *āriyaṉ kaṇṭāy tamiḻaṉ kaṇṭāy*, "you saw an Aryan, a Tamil." Śiva, that is, is realized through Sanskrit, a tongue central to the temple worship that Appar hails, but he is also realized through Tamil; he has become Tamil's own. Jainism, if we take the hymns of the *Nāyaṉmār* at their word, has not.[27] Appar was once a Jain, a period of his life that his hymns lament, and the passage of years that his verses chart leave Jainism rusting in the past, spurned in favor of a Śiva grounded in the Tamil language and on Tamil soil.

This is a message that Appar's partner in travel, Campantar, forcefully affirms. As for Appar, Jains are a regular target, and Campantar is if anything more forceful in his rejection of this creed. This bitter hostility to Jains, as is well known, is a central aspect of his persona in the Tamil Śaiva tradition, for Campantar is said to have effected the impalement of eight thousand Jains after he converted the Pāṇṭiya king Neṭumāṟaṉ to Śaivism. When we attend to Canmpantar's expressive style, however, we find a very deliberate technique used to elevate the knowledge of Tamil as a language into something more, a Tamil identity. Campantar employs a distinctive style of verse set (*patikam*, Sanskrit *paḍya*), in which the poet jumps from praising Śiva and the rewards he gives to his devotees to a description of himself that brings the verses to a close. His dismissals of Jainism immediately precede the final verse of a *patikam*; we leap with him from a rejected simulacrum of faith to its majestic consummation, where he—and Tamil—stand proud. And here we find a remarkable pattern, for 213 of his 384 *patikams* use the word *Tamil* in their final verse, when Campantar is rendering his own self-portrait. This is more than an issue of language use, for there are only a handful of occasions when he mentions the term in any other context. Tamil, more than something he uses, is something he wants to foreground with regard to who he is.

These celebrated worshippers of Śiva are *tamiḻvallār*, masters of Tamil, authentically Tamil to the Jains' detriment, and the extent to which the immense cultural achievements of Tamil Jains have long lain in the shadows gives a good sense of how thoroughly they succeeded.[28] If Śaivism in Tamilnadu portrays Jains as a minority who could participate in Tamil but were not of it, what, then, were the stakes? When Cuntarar, here called by his birth name, Ārūraṉ, speaks of Tamil, they could not be higher.

> Masters of the sweet Tamil verse
> sung on Kētāram, holy town of the Lord,
> set by Ārūraṉ
> a slave in service of Navakkaracar, the Tamil king of words,
> the Tamil Ñānacampantar,
> and any worshipper of Śiva,
> will live in the highest world.[29]

"Viewed from a slightly different angle," as Sheldon Pollock puts it so well, "linguism may be seen as an element of modernity creating the very past modernity claims to overcome" (2006: 507). I hope to have shown that we also find this happening in a time long past, when adherents to a theistic creed saw themselves as new and different and embraced Tamil as an exclusive mark of

self to make this contrast hold. And like the modern partisans of Tamil who spurned the Aryan Brahmin their politics envisioned, Tamil was not what they had but what they were, a way of being that—when we look at the sources—had to be manufactured every step of the way. A poem attributed to Cuntarar's friend, the Śaiva saint Cēramāṉ Perumāḷ, describes a beautiful woman in Śiva's heavenly city who becomes overwhelmed with love for the god. She is, the verse declares, "the divinity of shining, polished Tamil embodied, an ingénue full of perfected virtues."[30] The woman *is* Tamil, perfect and young, perfectly in love in a perfect world that no one else can touch.

Notes

[1] *Maṉōṉmaṇīyam, Pāyiram,* v. 1: *nīr āruṅ kaṭal uṭutta nilamaṭantaik keḻil oḻukum | cīr ārum vataṉam eṉat tikaḻ parata kaṇṭam itil, | takka ciṟu piṟai nutalum taritta naṟun tilakamumē | tekkaṇamum atiṟ ciṟanta tiraviṭa nal tirunāṭum; | attilaka vācaṉai pōl aṉaitt' ulakum iṉpam uṟa | etticaiyum pukaḻ maṇakka irunta perun tamiḻaṇaṅkē!*

[2] *Maṉōṉmaṇīyam, Pāyiram,* v. 2: *pall uyirum palav ulakum paṭaitt' aḷittut tuṭaikkiṉum ōr | ellaiy aṟu paramporuḷ muṉ irunta paṭi iruppatu pōl | kaṉṉaṭamum kaḷi teluṅkum kaviṉ malaiyāḷamum tuḷuvum | uṉ utaratt' utitt' eḻuntē oṉṟu pala āyiṭiṉum, | āriyam pōl ulaka vaḻakk' aḻint' oḻintu citaiyā un | cīr iḷamait tiṟam viyantu ceyal maṟantu vāḻttutumē!*

[3] Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ 1960: 6–7: *iṅṅaṉamāka nantamiḻ makkaḷiṉ muṉṉōrkaḷ ēṉaippaṇṭai nākarika makkaḷ ellāraiyumviṭa aṟivum uyaṟciyilun toḻiṉmuyaṟciyilum talaiciṟanta viḷaṅkiṉa pāṉmai, avar tammil nallicaip pulavarāyt tikaḻnta mēṉmakkaḷ iyaṟṟiya paḻaiya nūlkaḷāluñ ceyyuṭkaḷālum naṉku teḷiyappaṭutaluṭaṉ, avartam varalāṟukaḷai naṭuniṉṟārāyntu nūlkaḷ eḻutiya āṅkila āciriyariṉ uraikaḷālum, naṭuviṉṟi yārāyntu nūlkaḷ varainta nam intiya āciriyarkaḷ uraikaḷāluṅkūṭat teṟṟeṉap pulaṉākiṉṟaṉa.*

[4] Ibid., 12: *paṇṭait tamiḻarkaḷē mutaṉmutal nākarikattiṟ ciṟantavarāy, ēṉaip paḻaiya makkaṭkellām nākarikattaik kaṟpittavarāy irukkum uṇmai valiya cāṉṟukaḷāl nilaipeṟutal kaṇṭu maṉamporāmal, avarai āriyarpāl nākarikaṅ kaṟṟavar eṉṟu colli avveṇṇattai eppaṭiyāvatu uṇṭākkiviṭṭāl, avveṇṇam ārāycciyillārpāl eṅkum paravi, āriya nākarikamē ulaka nākarikattiṟkuk kāraṇam āyiṟṟu eṉṉum oru pōlikkoḷkai paraviya vaḻakkākiviṭum eṉak karutip pōlum… aṟiñar aṅṅaṉam valiya cāṉṟukaṭkellām māṟupēciṉar!*

[5] *Tēvāram*, a canonical treasury of poems composed by the three foremost Tamil Śaiva saints (*Nāyaṉmār*), Ñāṉacampantar, Nāvukkaracar (Appar), and Cuntarar, was recovered by Nampiyāṇṭār Nampi through, the tradition holds, the divine intercession of Gaṇeśa and the three saints themselves. In the Tamil Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition, its first *ācārya*, Nāthamuni, received the hymns of the Āḻvārs from Nammāḻvār while in trance, and then instituted their recitation at the Raṅkanāta temple in Śrīraṅkam. See Cutler 1987: 40–50.

[6] There are important exceptions to the racial tenor of Tamil literary histories, such as S. Vaiyapuri Pillai's *History of Tamil Language and Literature* (1956) and T. P. Meenakshisundaran's *A History of Tamil Literature* (1965).

[7] As Arjun Appadurai has kindly drawn to my attention, an exploration of the *Teṉkalai-Vaṭakalai* distinction in Tamil Vaiṣṇavism would be the first place to extend this discussion, from which we could begin to assess how broadly this argument could be generalized beyond the Śaiva materials I treat here.

[8] See, for instance, Irschick 1969; Kailasapathy 1979; Nampi Arooran 1980; Ramaswamy 1997; and Sivathamby 1978.

[9] Zvelebil's avant-propos to his *Companion Studies to the History of Tamil Literature* (1992) is a self-acknowledged case in point.

[10] My translation follows the old commentary provided by the Cāminātaiyar edition of the text (p. 165), which reads "'Tamiḻ ceṟittu' means creating discord in all the Tamil armies of the enemies" (*tamiḻ ceṟitt' eṉṟatu māṟṟāratu tamiḻappaṭaiyaiyellām iṭaiyaṟap paṭuttiy eṉṟavāṟu.*)

[11] See, for example, Wilden's discussion of the grammatical uncertainties that make interpreting *Kuṟuntokai* 106 subject to such variation (2002: 115–18).

[12] Compare Pollock 2006: 383–85.

[13] Vaiyapuri Pillai 1956: 76. Given its composite textual stratigraphy, dating *Tolkāppiyam* is a knotty task. Taken as a whole, the work postdates *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Kāmasūtra*, and for the purposes at hand we may heed Vaiyapuri Pillai and assign the work entire to the fifth century CE at the earliest (12–14).

[14] This is a feature shared by Pavaṇanti's thirteenth-century grammar *Naṉṉūl*, which only goes beyond replicating *Tolkāppiyam*'s mention of Tamil in the above circumstances to delimit the idealized boundaries of the language's application: "Among the eighteen languages, in the vast sea of Tamil, its four borders the fine [eastern] sea, Kumari, Kuṭakam, and Vēṅkaṭam" ("*mūvaṟu moḻiyuḷuṅ | kuṇakaṭal kumari kuṭakam vēṅkaṭam | eṉu' nāṉk' ellaiyiṉ iruntamiḻk kaṭaluḷ*," *Pāyiram* 7–9).

[15] *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporal, nūṟpā* 1, p. 5: *Iṉi, nutaliyaporuḷ eṉpatu—nūṟporuḷaic collutal eṉpatu. innūl eṉ nutaliṟṟō eṉiṉ, tamiḻ nutaliṟṟu eṉpatu.*

[16] *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporal, nūṟpā* 1, p. 6–7: *Akkālattup pāṇṭiyaṉāṭu paṉṉīriyāṇṭu vaṟkaṭañ ceṉṟatu. cellavē, pacikaṭukutalum, aracaṉ ciṭṭaraiyellāṅ kūvi, vammiṉ, yāṉ uṅkaḷaip puṟantarakilēṉ; eṉ tēyam peritum varuntukiṉṟatu; nīyir numakku aṟintavāṟu pukku, nāṭu nāṭāyiṉa ñāṉṟu eṉṉai uḷḷivammiṉ eṉṟāṉ. eṉa, aracaṉai viṭuttu ellārum pōyiṉa piṉṟaik kaṇakkiṉṟip paṉṉīriyāṇṭu kaḻintatu. kaḻinta piṉṉar, nāṭu maliya maḻai peytatu. peyta piṉṉar, aracaṉ, 'iṉi nāṭu nāṭāyiṟṟākaliṉ, nūlvallāraik koṇarka' eṉṟu ellāp pakkamum āṭpōkka, eḻuttatikāramum, collatikāramum yāppatikāramum vallārait talaippaṭṭuk koṇarntu, 'poruḷatikāram vallārai eṅkun talaippaṭṭilēm' eṉṟu vantār. Vara aracaṉum puṭaipaṭak kavaṉṟu 'eṉṉai eḻuttum collum yāppum ārāyvatu poruḷatikārattiṉ poruṭṭaṉṟē. poruḷatikāram peṟamēyeṉiṉ, ivai peṟṟum peṟṟilēm' eṉac collāniṟpa, maturai ālavāyil aḻal niṟakkaṭavuḷ cintippāṉ: 'eṉṉai pāvam! aracarkkuk kavaṟci peritāyiṟṟu; atu tāṉum ñāṉattiṭaiyatākalāṉ, yām ataṉait tīrkkaṟpālam' eṉṟu, ivvaṟupatu cūttirattaiyuñ ceytu mūṉṟu ceppitaḻakattu eḻutip pīṭattiṉ kīḻiṭṭāṉ… kāṭṭap, pirāmaṇaṉ cintippāṉ: 'aracaṉ poruḷatikāram iṉmaiyiṟ kavalkiṉṟāṉ eṉpatu kēṭṭuc cellāniṉṟatu uṇarntu namperumāṉ aruḷic ceytāṉākum' eṉṟu taṉ akam pukutātē, kōyiṟ ṟalaikkaṭaic ceṉṟu niṉṟu, kaṭaikāppārkku uṇarttak, kaṭaikāppār aracaṟku uṇartta, aracaṉ, 'pukutuka,' eṉap pirāmaṇaṉaik kūvac ceṉṟu pukkuk kāṭṭa ēṟṟukkoṇṭu nōkkip, 'poruḷatikāram! itu namperumāṉ namatu iṭukkaṇ kaṇṭu aruḷic ceytāṉākaṟpālatu!' eṉṟu, atticai nōkkit toḻutukoṇṭu niṉṟu.*

[17] *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporal*, *nūṟpā* 1, p. 6: *Avar caṅkam iruntu tamiḻ ārāyntatu āyirattu eṇṇūṟṟu aimpatiṟṟiyāṇṭu eṉpa.*

[18] *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporal*, *nūṟpā* p. 8: *Cūttirañ ceytāṉ ālavāyil avircaṭaik kaṭavuḷ aṉṟē, avaṉaiyē kāraṇikaṉaiyun taral veṇṭum enac ceṉṟu varaṅkiṭattum eṉṟu varaṅkiṭappa, iṭaiyāmattu, 'ivvūr uppūri kuṭikiḻār makaṉāvāṉ uruttira caṉmaṉ eṉpāṉ, paiṅkaṇṇaṉ, puṉmayiraṉ, aiyāṭṭaip pirāyattāṉ, oru mūṅkaippiḷḷai uḷaṉ; aṉṉaṉ eṉṟu ikaḻātu koṇṭupōntu, ācaṉattiṉmēl irīikkīḻiruntu cūttirap poruḷ uraittāṟ kaṇṇīr vārntu meymayir cilirkkum, meyyāyiṉa urai kēṭṭaviṭattu; meyyallā urai kēṭṭaviṭattu vāḷā irukkum; avaṉ kumāra teyvam, aṅkōr cāpattiṉāl toṉṟiṉāṉ' eṉa mukkāl icaittkural ellārkkum uṭaṉ pāṭāyiṟṟu… kaṇakkāyaṉār makaṉār nakkīraṉār uraittaviṭattup patantoṟuṅ kaṇṇīr vārntu, meymayir cilirppa iruntāṉ iruppa, ārppeṭuttu, 'meyyurai peṟṟām innūṟku!' eṉṟār.*

[19] The *Muttoḷḷāyiram* verse in question, which I shall discuss below, begins with the phrase *pārpaṭupa cempoṉ patipaṭupa muttamiḻnūl* (given its status as a recovered text, *Muttoḷḷāyiram* verses have no standard order). The *Paripāṭal* citation is a fragment (*tiraṭṭu* 4 in Gros's edition), *terimāṇ ṭamiḻmummait teṉṉam poruppaṉ | parimā niraiyiṉ parantaṉṟu vaiyai*, "Like a row of horses, the river Vaiyai [Vaigai] opens out from the southern mountains, where the glorious threefold Tamil is known." This fragment is not found in the Cāminātaiyar edition of the text; Gros explains its attribution to the text as follows: "l'identification de *paripāṭal* repose sur l'autorité du *nuṇ poruḷ mālai*, ouvrage consacré à élucider les subtilités du commentaire du KuRaḷ [Tirukkuṟaḷ] par P[arimēlaḻakar]" (*Paripāṭal* 1968: 305).

[20] The text describes Kṛṣṇa as breaking the *kuruntu* tree, a myth unknown to contemporary northern texts (Hardy 1983: 169).

[21] This is a city, moreover, that both texts refer to as "Kūṭal," providing further evidence of their shared literary context.

[22] *Taḷḷāp poruḷiyalpiṟ ṟaṇṭamiḻāy vantilār | koḷḷārik kuṉṟu payaṉ* (9.25–26).

[23] *Ippuṇarcciyai vēṇṭukiṉṟa poruḷilakkaṇattaiyuṭaiya tamiḻai ārāyāta talaivar kaḷvoḻukkattaik koḷḷamāṭṭār*. I follow Mu. Aruṇācalam in dating Parimēlaḻakar in the thirteenth century (1970: 64–68); cf. Vaiyapuri Pillai's fourteenth-century attribution (1956: 8, 87).

[24] *Maṭaṅkā mayil ūrti maintaṉai nāḷum kaṭampampūk koṇṭ' ēttiy aṟṟāl – toṭaṅkamaruḷ | niṉṟ' ilaṅkuveṉṟiniṟai katirvēl māraṉai | intamiḻāl yām pāṭum pāṭṭu.*

[25] *Pār paṭupa cempoṉ pati paṭupa muttamiḻ nūl | nīr paṭupa veṇ caṅkum nittilamum—cāral | malai paṭupa yāṉai vayamāraṉ kūrvēṟṟalai paṭupa tār vēntar mārpu.*

[26] *Tirumuṟai* 6.23.5: *Mūri muḻaṅk' oli nīr āṉaṉ kaṇṭāy muḻut taḻal pōl mēṉi mutalvaṉ kaṇṭāy | ēri niṟaint' aṉaiya celvaṉ kaṇṭāy iṉṉaṭiyārkk' iṉpam viḷaippāṉ kaṇṭāy | āriyaṉ kaṇṭāy tamiḻaṉ kaṇṭāy aṇṇāmalaiy uṟaiy em aṇṇal kaṇṭāy | vāri matakaḷiṟē pōlvāṉ kaṇṭāy maṟaikkāṭṭ' uṟaiyum maṇāḷaṉ tāṉē.*

[27] Peterson 1998 provides a broad discussion of how the *Tēvāram* hymns exclude Jains from "Tamilness." See especially pages 168–73.

[28] Discussing, respectively, the ongoing intellectual encounter between Jains and Tamil Śaivas right up through the twelfth century, the inscriptional testimony regarding the lives of Jain women in Tamilnadu, and the regular ostracization of Jains in Tamil hymns and hagiography, the contributions of Davis (1998), Orr (1998), and Peterson (1998) to the volume *Open Boundaries* all throw a rewarding light on these shadows for the period I am considering here. Monius 2004 brings the discussion to the high Cōḻa period, exploring the ways in which courtly Śaiva texts, particularly *Periyapurāṇam*, are indebted to earlier Jain writing in Tamil.

[29] *Tirumuṟai* 7.78.10: *Nāviṉ micaiy araiyaṉṉoṭu tamiḻ ñāṉacampantaṉ | yāvar civaṉ aṭiyārkaḷukk' aṭiyāṉ aṭit toṇṭaṉ | tēvan tiruk kētārattai ūraṉṉ urai ceyta | pāviṉ ṟamiḻ vallār paralōkatt' iruppārē*. I follow the Tarumapuṟam Ātīṉam's commentary in taking the first instance of the word *tamiḻ* as *tāppicai*, an attribution that relates both to what precedes it and what follows it.

[30] *Tirukkailāya Ñāṉa Ulā*, vv. 111–112: *oḷḷiya | tūn tamiḻiṉ teyva vaṭivāḷ tiruntiya cīr | vāynta maṭantaip pirāyattāḷ*.

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8

Saffron in the Rasam

Whitney Cox

Sometime around the year 1087 CE, the poet Bilhaṇa suffered a bout of homesickness. Though born and raised in the village of Koṇamukha in Kashmir, Bilhaṇa had made his way in the world as a peripatetic pandit and author and was at the time living at the court of the Cālukya king Vikramāditya VI in Kalyāṇa (now Basavakalyāṇ in Bidar district in northeastern Karnataka). It was perhaps as he was putting the final touches on his verse biography of his royal patron, the *Vikramāṅkadevacarita*, that he decided to include the following verse:

> *sahodarāḥ kuṅkumakesarāṇāṃ bhavanti nūnaṃ kavitāvilāsāḥ |*
> *na śāradādeśam apāsya dṛṣṭas teṣāṃ yad anyatra mayā prarohaḥ||*
>
> It seems that those who really delight in poetry are close kin to the saffron flower, for I haven't seen a trace of them anywhere else since I left Kashmir, Sarasvatī's country.[1]

We can feel some empathy for Bilhaṇa, still, he was not being entirely fair, or accurate. The late eleventh century was a time of fervid literary creativity in the southern peninsula; but more important, this was a creativity fueled in a great many ways by the learned culture of the Valley of Kashmir itself. Though we know more about Bilhaṇa's career than perhaps any other (and though he was a poet of genius), he was only a single player in the much wider drama of the dissemination of this culture. The abundant surviving evidence of this dissemination presents us with a centuries-long collective effort to import and domesticate the many discrete sectors of the learned culture of Kashmir. Authors like Bilhaṇa found themselves and their works met with interest throughout the peninsula, while in turn southerners made the long trek northward to study and return with fresh copies of the texts they studied there.

Clearly, what I refer to here is an episode in the history of the Sanskrit cosmopolis, that centuries-long political, cultural, and sociomoral complex

that Sheldon Pollock has described so compellingly. It is in light of this that I want to address the southern reception and adaptation of Kashmir's Sanskritic culture.[2] The movement of literati and their texts from Kashmir to the southern reaches of the subcontinent might appear to be simply a part of the steady state of cosmopolitan life, to be in fact just one of the many channels of cultural flows that knit this world together during the centuries that it perdured. For Sanskritic literati to have been cosmopolitan, after all, presumes and to some degree necessitates the fact that they participated in the cultural conversation with their counterparts in other parts of southern Asia. There are, however, a number of ways in which this particular process can be distinguished within the wider cosmopolitan order.

First of all, there is the nature of the specific contributions of Kashmir to Sanskrit literature and systematic thought. As McCrea (2008) has demonstrated for the history of Sanskrit literary theory (*alaṅkāraśāstra*), and as I think can be argued more generally, Kashmir from the middle of the ninth century was home to a series of revolutions in systematic thought (*śāstra*) and literature (*kāvya*) both.[3] The dissemination of this at once self-consciously Kashmirian and self-consciously avant-garde ferment already presents us with a series of discrete events, individual moments where the rules of the cosmopolitan game were substantially revised. And while the South was hardly the sole beneficiary of these innovations, it was powerfully and indelibly effected by them.

But more important, this suggests ways in which we might begin to understand the sociality of Sanskrit literature and knowledge more precisely, and so to track the historical contours of Sanskrit's career in the second millennium of the common era. In mapping the space of Sanskrit and the cosmopolitan vernacular literatures, Pollock has argued that it is royal courts that acted as venues for practically all consequential cultural production and reimagination, and he has presented massive amounts of documentation to support this claim.[4] But while we do in fact see that the courtly milieu provided a site for the southern domestication of Kashmirian texts and authors, it was only one of a plurality of such forums. Poets like Bilhaṇa were surely attracted to these bright, glamorous centers of cultural life, but these can best be understood as the important nodes within networks that stretched through a multitude of different social spaces, ranging from individual households and Brahmanical estates to dispersed communities of shared religious discipline and collectively cultivated literary taste.

Equally, the southern reception of the diverse world of Kashmirian Sanskrit textuality provides yet another case of the continued vitality of Sanskrit as a

medium of thought and expression even in the midst of vernacular ascendency. Kashmirian texts were as actively incorporated by authors writing in the Dravidian vernaculars as they were by those working exclusively in Sanskrit, and it is possible to see in the early centuries of the second millennium the creation and vital flourishing of the sort of Sanskrit cultures that were at once consummately cosmopolitan and deeply inflected by the local, of the sort to which Bronner and Shulman (2006) have recently drawn attention.[5]

It is with all of this in mind that I would like to linger for a moment on Bilhaṇa's rather melancholy verse, especially its poetic conceit or *utprekṣā*. People of real taste and sensitivity (*kavitāvilāsāḥ*) are just like the saffron crocus: you cannot find them anywhere but in the Valley of Kashmir. It is not just the crocus, but its pistil (*kesara*), that Bilhaṇa calls to mind here: it is this part of the crocus, of course, that is dried to make the spice or vegetable dye that we call saffron (*kuṅkuma*). And the only place in southern Asia where the saffron crocus grows is in fact Kashmir. But while saffron is only native to the valley, it was a luxury that some people possessed and a great many more knew about and desired throughout India, even into the deep South. One of the ways we know this is because an association of pedlars and merchants calling itself the Five Hundred Masters of Ayyāvoḷe mentions saffron specifically among the goods it had in trade in the Kannada and Tamil countries, both in the eulogistic advertisements that begin its surviving public records and in the details of its accounts.[6]

In the far South, however, something very peculiar happened to those saffron threads that wended their way down from the northern mountains. This rare, precious stuff came to be fused during its passage through the southern regions with something far more homely and nearer to hand, in the form of the powdered root of the turmeric plant. Turmeric, with its slight taste of bitterness and its penchant for dying clothes (and fingers) yellow is a sensible enough substitute for saffron, which—then as now—was an expensive luxury. This engendered an interesting and far-ranging confusion: in the medieval period, and in as places as far-flung as Basra and the Chinese imperial court, Indian saffron and Indian turmeric were so often referred to by the same name as to be indistinguishable. These spices (whatever they were) were almost certainly transhipped through the southern ports of Malabar or Coḻamaṇḍalam (where, it should be said, the two are always kept lexically distinct: *hāridrā* or *mañcal* is never the same as *kuṅkuma*). This confusion continued into the early modern period; A Portuguese account from the 1560s calls turmeric "country saffron" and points southward from Goa to Kerala and Karnataka as its source, noting that people all over the Arabian Sea and into Turkey were

confused by the two.[7] The legacy of this substitution remains with us today; many European languages, as well as the Linnaean classificatory binomial for the turmeric plant, *Curcuma longa*, retain a distant echo of its conceptual fusion with saffron, that is, with *kuṅkuma*.

In laying my interests in texts alongside the curious history of saffron's cultural life in South India and beyond, I don't just mean this to be just a conceit, the way that Bilhaṇa did. Rather, it is for me vitally important to try to understand the history of texts as a part of the history of social life and material culture. It was along the same routes that saffron traveled southward—and perhaps in the same caravans or even the same parcels—that the textual culture of Kashmir went global within the Indic world of the early second millennium, with massive and palpable consequences for intellectual, religious, and cultural life in the far south, the ramifications of which are still with us.

We can reject outright the explanation that this was the fallout from Turkic incursions in the North. There is no evidence that suggests that the depredations of Ghaznavid or other Central Asian warrior groups had any immediate effect on Kashmir in this period (indeed, al-Beruni and Kalhaṇa both say just the opposite), and the continuous circulation of texts from the twelfth century onward suggests that the occupation of the northern Indian plains by the nascent Sultanate had a negligible effect on the steady trickle of manuscripts, scribes, and literati into and out of Kashmir.

Something that bears emphasis is how rapidly this process seems to unfold. Within a generation of Bilhaṇa's lifetime, around the turn of the twelfth century, there is evidence of a great number of quite recently composed Kashmirian texts being studied in the South.[8] While accounts as rich as Bilhaṇa's are few and far between, a much richer attestation of this movement can be seen in the surviving manuscripts of texts of Kashmirian origin that were transmitted to the South and there copied and disseminated. As a result of the anonymous labors of thousands of copyists, interested readers, and bibliophiles throughout the peninsula, we find texts—especially works on poetics and Śaiva religious materials—that have since disappeared in the North, or that were studied much more intensely in the South.

A census of such works, published and unpublished, would be a valuable contribution to our knowledge. But what I think may be the most suggestive way to begin to understand the significance of this process of reception and adaptation is by tracing pieces of language rather than entire texts. By this, I don't mean quotation or commentary in the conventional way we think about these, though both occurred. Instead, I mean the ways that integral "chunks" of

Kashmirian works were unmoored from their textual surroundings by southern authors and then resituated within their own works. This is not plagiarism or simple epitome: the language of Kashmirian authors—ranging from key words and phrases to whole textual arguments—was borrowed, refigured, and transformed in southern hands.

The very fact of this process of textual recasting is very telling; what we are faced with in the southern materials is not evidence of a straightforward *translatio studii* or of the unmarked movement within some isotonic, putatively self-identical cosmopolitan space. Instead, we can begin to glimpse the workings of a complex negotiation between the local needs and problematics and the inheritance of several brilliant generations of thinkers and authors active within the Kashmirian hothouse. It is not just that Kashmirian texts and authors supplied a prestigious set of models to be adopted, whether in style or in content—invoking "prestige" in any case simply assumes what is to be proven. Instead, we can see their idioms, characteristic turns of phrase, and intellectual problematics being refitted to a different milieu. Refitted, but also rewritten in a way that at times makes the shape of the original almost indistinguishable. Once you begin to look carefully for these transformations, the distance from northern model to southern adaptation itself can tell us interesting things, ranging from data for textual criticism to larger issues of intellectual orientation and cultural ethos.

These traces of Kashmirian language can be difficult to track, until you learn how to see them. It is as if threads of Kashmiri saffron had been mixed into a dish of *rasam*, the prototypically southern broth of pepper and tamarind. The saffron traces are certainly there, adding something indelible, but their fragrance, flavor, and color are mixed up with local tastes and ingredients. Southern authors mixed in their Kashmirian ingredients with care, and the end result differed from anything you might have found in the valley.

There are three case studies of these textual transformations that I would like to briefly outline here. In these, we move successively away from Bilhaṇa's adopted home in the northwestern Deccan, down through the west coast and into the heartland of the Tamil plains. The cases I will survey date from the second half of the twelfth to the end of the thirteenth century; while I lay no claim to being exhaustive—indeed, all three are not much more than sketches of deeply complex textual dynamics—they are meant to index separate but related tendencies within the transfiguration of Kashmirian knowledge and literary energy in the wider South. Successively but cumulatively, they are meant to highlight the resituation of Kashmirian problematics within the different social, intellectual, and institutional landscape of the peninsula.

Case I: Balligāve

In the twelfth century the town of Balligāve was the capital of the Banavāse region, the prize jewel of the western Deccan. Several of the town's Cālukya-style temples (notably the Dakṣiṇakedāreśvara and the Pañcaliṅgeśvara) are home to a remarkable corpus of epigraphical documents. These inscriptions, written in both Sanskrit and Kannada and detailing the workings of a series of institutions associated with the Śaiva order referred to therein as the Kālāmukhas,[9] have been the subject of numerous studies since their initial publication by Rice in 1901.[10] There is, however, a telling detail to be found there that has heretofore gone unnoticed. A great many of these records begin with a noteworthy invocatory verse, one familiar to any student of Sanskrit literature. It reads:

> *namas tuṅgaśiraścumbicandracāmaracārave |*
> *trailokyanagarārambhamūlastambhāya śambhave ||*

> Made lovely by that fly-whisk, the Moon,
> as it kisses the top of His head,
> praise be to Śambhu,
> the central pillar in the construction of the city
> that is the triple world.

This is the opening benediction to Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*. The Balligāve records are hardly unique in this choice; interestingly enough, this *śloka* had a long and distinguished career as the industry standard opening to epigraphical charters throughout the Deccan. For centuries, and irrespective of the ruling dynasty, Deccani engravers long felt the need to open their works with this elegantly alliterative prayer to Śiva, employing it as what Pollock, in another context, has called their epigraphical "letterhead" (2006: 156). What is remarkable in a few cases among the Balligāve records is what comes next. In three cases, subjoined to this verse is a second invocation:

> *namaḥ śāśvatikānandajñānaiśvaryamayātmane |*
> *saṃkalpasaphalabrahmastambārambhāya śambhave ||*

> Consisting solely of sempiternal joy, wisdom, and power,
> praise be to Śambhu,
> at whose behest all the doings of the world,
> from Brahmā to the merest blade of grass
> are brought to fruition.

Even to a reader without Sanskrit, the close accord between these two verses

in their sound and shape is obvious. But this second *śloka*, written as a clear homage to Bāṇa's, was not a southern invention. Rather, it is the opening verse to Jayantabhaṭṭa's late-ninth-century *Nyāyamañjarī*, a masterpiece of philosophical speculation composed in the midst of the opening decades of Kashmir's intellectual revolution. The relationship between the two verses is, as I said, clear enough;[11] its three occurrences here (EC 7: Sk. 92, Sk. 96, Sk. 119), dated 1168, 1179, and 1181 CE, are all found in records containing the *biruda*s of the Kalacuri king Bijjaḷa (/Bijjaṇa) and are all closely associated with an activist Kālāmukha abbot (*maṭhādhipati*) called Vāmaśakti.[12] This Śaiva guru appears to have closely linked his public fortunes with the Kalacuri king, as well as his son and successor Sovideva, who at the time had seized control of the Banavāse from their erstwhile Cālukya overlords.[13] Interestingly, the use of the Jayanta verse can itself be placed in a longer historical narrative of the region, as for some decades the public narrative of Balligāve and Banavāse more generally had been in a state of flux. The anonymous poet-compilers of these and other local records had ceased by the early decades of the twelfth century simply to reproduce the words of the Cālukya chancellery (and had abandoned the Cālukya letterhead verse *jayaty āviṣkṛtaṃ viṣṇor*, etc.) and entered a period of experimentation, trying out new poetic-rhetorical means in which to frame themselves and their charters' claims.[14]

On one level, these records function as a kind of epigraphic literary criticism, with the Kālāmukha composers drawing attention to the Kashmirian philosopher's source text. But in juxtaposing the two verses, exactly reproducing their text, the Kālāmukhas subtly but definitively announced themselves to be participants in the common cultural order that united the disparate kingdoms of the central and western Deccan. At the same time they implied that this did not form the limits of their textual horizons and that they saw themselves as heirs to the intellectual project embodied in Jayanta's great work. For the Balligāve Kālāmukhas' relationship to the *Nyāyamañjarī* does not in fact end with this invocation. These Kālāmukha inscriptions are primarily records of pious donations to the temples and their affiliated *maṭha*s (monastic institutions), but they also furnish a detailed perspective on the politics of knowledge in twelfth-century Kannada country. And in the language and rhetoric they use in crafting these representations, these records are indebted to Jayanta's effort to place logic, or Nyāya (and a decidedly Śaiva theistic spin on Nyāya at that), at the summit of the forms of Brahmanical knowledge. As Kei Kataoka (2003) and Csaba Dezső (2006) have recently demonstrated, Jayanta's proposition was that it is only Nyāya that could mount a reasoned defense of the traditional Vedic orthodoxy and so provide a bulwark against

the corrosive influence of Buddhism in late-first-millennium Kashmir.[15]

Key to this was an argument about disciplinarity, that is, about the hierarchy of the Brahmanical knowledges or the fourteen *vidyāsthāna*s. Some years ago, Pollock drew attention to the importance of Jayanta's remounting of this old ideological commonplace in the opening section of the NM.[16] The Kālāmukhas constantly point toward this hierarchy of accepted and rejected knowledge but in the different world of the Deccan in the early second millennium. The indebtedness of the Kālāmukhas to the *Nyāyamañjarī* does not seem to be traceable in the form of direct quotation of the text's arguments; instead, it rests on an adoption of its ethos and rhetoric. This is especially evident in the ornate eulogies to the leading members of the order found throughout the corpus. These eulogies are "workly" representations, in Pollock's terms (1998a, 2006), attempts to secure fame for their subjects while equally intervening into social life in consequential ways. It is Jayanta's particular vision of Vedic orthodoxy sustained and defended by Nyāya, with the other forms of knowledge as subsidiary, including the Kālāmukha/Pāśupata scriptures, that forms the key to these inscriptions' rhetoric, as in the following verse praising Vāmaśakti (Sk. 102, 1162 CE):

> *vedo mūlam atho vṛtir dṛḍhataraṃ nyāyādiśāstraṃ khalu*
> *smṛtyādir viṭapas satāṃ kisalayo dharmānurāgaḥ kriyāḥ* |
> *puṣpaṃ yat śivaśāsanoktividitaṃ saṅkalpitārthaṃ phalaṃ*
> *dharmaḥ kalpataruḥ karotu bhavataḥ śrīvāmaśakter muneḥ* ||

> The Veda is its root, and indeed Nyāya and the other knowledge systems are firmly [set as] a fence, the *smṛti*s and other [authoritative teachings] are its branches, good people's devotion to *dharma* its fresh shoots, and their actions its blossom: Vāmaśakti, revered sage, may the wish-giving tree of your teaching yield up the promised fruit that is taught in Śiva's scriptures.[17]

The incorporation of Jayanta's hierarchy of knowledge, incidentally, goes some way toward explaining a feature of the records' rhetoric that has puzzled earlier readers: their studied ambivalence toward other schools of thought. When, in an early-twelfth-century record, the Kālāmukha official Someśvara is described as "The spring month of Caitra for [the blossoming of] the mango-tree that is [the Jain logician] Akalaṅka" and "the jangling pearl necklace on the wide throat of Lady Mīmāṃsā" and when, a generation later, his successor Vidyābharaṇa is called "a lion leaping to smash open the broad forehead of the elephant that is the Mīmāṃsā doctrine" and "a furious sun to the lotus cluster of the Jaina teaching," there is no implied difference in the attitudes of the two men or any change in their relations to other philosophies.[18] Instead we can

see the ends to which the Kālāmukhas have remounted Jayanta's philosophy of knowledge in their own local world. The Kālāmukhas set out an aggressive universalism here that precedes their explicit citation of the *Nyāyamañjarī* but is clearly premised on a knowledge of the text.[19]

The Balligāve records are a very rich textual ensemble, and more work is needed on their structure, rhetoric, and place within the wider world of the twelfth-century western Deccan. Their relationship to Jayantabhaṭṭa and his NM is only a single facet in this complex picture. But it is only in light of this indebtedness that we can begin to understand what exactly these Kannadiga Śaiva intellectuals were interested in accomplishing and what their prodigious institution building really meant. Jayanta's work appears to have provided a charter or template with which the Kālāmukhas of Banavāse were able to improvise their own sociotextual project, what amounted to the creation of a sectarian city-state, with consequences for the domination of institutional space within Balligāve and beyond.[20]

Case II: Uttaramerūr

The second case takes us into the Tamil country of the far south and into the question of the impact of the valley's signal cultural export, the discipline of literary theory or *alaṅkāraśāstra*. One of the key monuments of the field's southern reception can be seen in the dramaturgist Śāradātanaya's verse essay, the *Bhāvaprakāśana* (On the Displaying of Emotions).[21] This is a text of profoundly synthetic ambition, but throughout—and especially in his understanding of the deep linguistic mechanisms of poetic language—Śāradātanaya relies on recognizably Kashmirian works, sometimes acknowledging them and sometimes not.[22]

In the *Bhāvaprakāśana*'s sixth chapter, where the workings of affective communication form the principal topic, the text really becomes a half-rewritten palimpsest, so heavy is the layering of borrowings, adaptations, homages, and sometimes even invented citations. But my interest here lies in its pattern of systematic misquotation or maladaptation. In his recasting into verse what are often prose works, Śāradātanaya necessarily had to alter their wording. What a close look into these recastings shows, however, is that he often subtly rewrites these sources to deliberately change their argument. For instance, in the course of his extensive reworking of Mammaṭa's manual on the poetic arts, the *Kāvyaprakāśa*, Śāradātanaya deliberately effaces the point under discussion, the distinction between two theories of sentential semantics associated with different schools of Mīmāṃsā ritualists. At issue here is the question of whether sentence meaning can be interpreted analytically, on the

Table 1: Bhāvaprakāśana and Kāvyaprakāśa Compared

Bhāvaprakāśana, p. 160	*Kāvyaprakāśa*, pp. 25–27 (K= *kārikā*, V= *vṛtti*)
śabdārthayoḥ svarūpaṃ tu	V: *krameṇa* ***śabdārthayoḥ svarūpam*** *āha:*
tad vivicyābhidhīyate ‖ ***śabdas tridhā vācakaś ca tathā lākṣaṇiko 'pi ca*** | ***vyañjakaś ca***	K: *syād* ***vācako lākṣaṇikaḥ śabdo*** *'tra* ***vyañjakas tridhā*** |
	V: *atreti kāvye eṣāṃ svarūpaṃ vakṣyate:*
tadarthaś ca *tridhā* ***vācyādibhedataḥ*** ‖	K: ***vācyādayas tadarthāḥ*** *syuḥ*
	V: ***vācyalakṣyavyaṅgyāḥ***
tātparyārthaḥ *padārthebhyo vākyārtho'stīti* ***kecana*** |	K: ***tātparyārtho*** *'pi* ***keṣucit*** ‖
	V: *ākāṅkṣāyogyatāsaṃnidhivaśād vakṣyamāṇasvarūpāṇāṃ padārthānāṃ samanvaye tātparyārtho viśeṣavapur apadārtho 'pi vākyārthaḥ samullasatīti abhihitānvayavādināṃ matam.*
vācyādir artho vākyārtha iti prābhākarādayaḥ ‖	*vācya eva vākyārtha ity anvitābhidhānavādinaḥ*
But [other teachers] explain **the real nature of word and meaning** [as follows:] **word is threefold: denotative, figurative, and suggestive,**	[V:] He successively speaks of **the real nature of word and meaning** [K:] In this, let **word be threefold: denotative, figurative, and suggestive.** [V:] 'In this' [means] 'in a literary work.' He will subsequently explain the real nature of these.
and **meaning** is also so divided into **denoted,** etc.	[K:] And let their **meanings** be the **denoted, etc.** [V:] i.e. the denoted, the figured, and the suggested.
The meaning of a sentence is the **overall meaning,** which arises from the individual word meanings—this is the way that **some people** describe it.	[K:] For **some people**, there is also an **overall meaning.** [V:] When there is a connection of the word meanings (whose nature will be explained momentarily) owing to syntactic expectancy, semantic cohesion, and proximity, a sentence meaning—the overall meaning becomes manifest. This has the form of a particular, though it is not itself the meaning of word. This is the theory of the supporters of the *abhihitānvayavāda*.
The Prābhākaras and others say that the sentence meaning ***is the (set of) meanings, the denoted, etc.**	The supporters of the *anvitābhidhānavāda* [say] that the meaning of a sentence is ***solely the denoted meaning.**

basis of the semantic contribution of each separate word (the theory of the followers of Kumārila), or whether it can only be arrived at holistically, from the entire utterance (the position of the followers of Prabhākara). From the time of Abhinavagupta, Kashmirian literary theorists had been sympathetic to the former, Bhāṭṭa, view. A comparison of Śāradātanaya's re-presentation with Mammaṭa's original understanding of this distinction shows the dimensions of the change here (see table 1).

Śāradātanaya makes what appear to be two conscious changes here: he fails to exemplify part of the prose gloss on a single *kārikā* root-verse,[23] and—seemingly inexplicably—he changes both the wording and the sense of Mammaṭa's dismissively brief description of the *anvitābhidhānavāda*, the holistic theory of meaning associated with Prabhākara. Now, according to Śāradātanaya's rewriting, the basic criticism of the Prābhākara position, that it fails to account for the different levels of meaning, is replaced by an affirmation of the idea that sentences *can* in fact embody multiple meaning functions.

This is not, I think, evidence of his misunderstanding or mishandling of his sources. But the other ready-to-hand explanation is not sufficient either: that Śāradātanaya rewrote the passage simply to bring it into line with the Prābhākara view, that of the dominant southern tradition of Mīmāṃsā. Śāradātanaya does a perfectly adequate job of either quoting or closely paraphrasing Mammaṭa (as he does with his other sources) until he comes to the point of the earlier author's dismissal of the Prābhākara position. Here the language is more or less retained, but its intention is refigured or reset within a fundamentally different argumentative context.

For all that Śāradātanaya is writing under the influence of the mature, reception-oriented form of Kashmirian literary theory, it is obvious that he is departing from this model in crucial ways. The fact of this departure, and indeed its direction, can be seen even from the text's title. Other works written in the wake of the Kashmirian synthesis tend to topicalize aestheticized emotional flavor, or *rasa*, the end product of the process of the experience of the work of art, and they signal this in their titles—for instance, the *Rasārṇavasudhākara*, the *Rasakalikā*, the *Rasagaṅgādhara*, *et mult. cet.* By contrast, the *Bhāvaprakāśana* is focused not on this endpoint but on its trigger or reagent, the *bhāvas*, or basic emotional states that are precursors to the *rasas*.

This is further borne out in the structure of Śāradātanaya's presentation; he begins his text, in fact, with a lengthy and wholly original etymological analysis of the *bhāvas*, and he develops his explanation of the ways in which

artistic language functions through constant reference to these elements rather than their endpoint. By contrast, his treatment of the *rasas* seems cursory. This constructive (as opposed to receptive) approach to literary art marks a real distinction over the Kashmirian theorists; it enables him to reverse the priorities of his inherited models, while retaining their terms and their characteristic style of argument, and instead of a literary theory centered on the sensitive reader or *sahṛdaya* and the moment of reception, we find the theoretical innovations applied to the poet's act of poetic creation. It is this emphasis that would seem to motivate his collapsing of the distinction between the two Mīmāṃsā theories; it is his interest in the effect of the whole that the Prābhākara theory enables, and not just parochial loyalties, that seems to drive his re-creation of his source text.[24]

This idiosyncrasy on Śāradātanaya's part might suggest that he was influenced by a different, local set of aesthetic priorities, for instance, those embodied in the vernacular literary theory found in the Tamil *Tolkāppiyam* and its commentaries. And in fact there are some suggestive parallels between the *Bhāvaprakāśana* and these works. But more significantly, even the earliest surviving commentary on the *Tolkāppiyam*, that of Iḷampūraṇar, reflects the definite, if etiolated, influence of Abhinavagupta's distinctive theories of the working of *śāntarasa* or the sentiment of beatific calm.[25] This is a testament to the transmissional vigor of Kashmirian texts into the furthest and putatively least Sanskritized reaches of the far South and suggests that the synthetic ambitions of a Sanskrit pandit like Śāradātanaya were a part of a wider conversation, crossing the boundaries between genres and languages.

Case III: Cidambaram, and Beyond

Maheśvarānanda's *Mahārthamañjarī* ("Flower-Cluster of the Great Purpose," MM) was composed in the great temple city of Cidambaram and was in all likelihood completed in the latter part of the thirteenth century.[26] It is centrally concerned with teaching the nature of the worship of a complex pantheon of Śaiva goddesses, along with the theological principles that follow from this worship. Its base text, the *Mañjarī*, or "Flower-Cluster" properly speaking is a set of seventy-one verses composed not in Sanskrit but in Māhārāṣṭrī Prakrit, a language normally reserved for certain kinds of erotic and courtly poetry. These are accompanied by an autocommentary, the *Mahārthamañjarī-parimala* ("Fragrance" of the Flower-Cluster, MMP), which forms the major part of Maheśvarānanda's complex text and is full of ancillary discussions and digressions on a very wide range of topics. A great many of the texts that Maheśvarānanda cites, discusses, comments on, and integrates into his

own writing in the commentary are from Kashmir. While the integration and reworking of the scriptural and exegetical works of the Śaiva religion are often very intricate, and make for fascinating reading, here I will focus yet again on the place of literary theory in the *Mahārthamañjarī*, especially that of Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* (Light on Literary Suggestion), written circa 850 CE.

It doesn't take too much detective work to argue that the *Dhvanyāloka* was influential upon Maheśvarānanda; he announces as much at the work's end, where he says (MMP 195),

> *sāhityābdhau karṇadhāro 'ham āsaṃ kāvyālokaṃ locanaṃ cānuśīlya* |
>
> I was a navigator on the sea that is Literature,
> once I'd mastered the *Kāvyāloka* (= *Dhvanyāloka*) and the *Locana*.

The *Locana* (properly, the *Dhvanyālokalocana* or "An Eye for the Light on Suggestion") mentioned here is the authoritative commentary by Abhinavagupta; like many of their readers, Maheśvarānanda treats the text and commentary as a single, unified treatise. Ānanda's argument, in briefest terms, is not only that great pieces of literary art contain meanings that are inexplicit yet nevertheless understood by sensitive readers, but that the very capacity for this understanding depends on the existence of a previously untheorized power of language that is peculiar to literature, namely, its capacity for suggestion (*dhvani*). Over the course of the *Dhvanyāloka*'s four chapters, more and more complex examples are adduced, but the pride of place Ānandavardhana accorded to the Prakrit lyric verses was seemingly a deliberate decision. It is verses in Māhārāṣṭrī that are allowed to make the first, putatively self-evident demonstration of the existence of *dhvani*, as they "[lent] themselves naturally to the thesis which Ānanda set out to defend," as Ingalls put it (1990: 12). While other works in the tradition of Maheśvarānanda's Krama goddess cult reflect a habit of composition in languages other than Sanskrit, it is the model supplied by the Kashmirian literary theory that provides a rationale for his decision to create his own very different bilingual work, the MM.[27]

Certainly, the model for the particular form of MM's Prakrit root verses comes from the use of this literature as source texts in the earlier literary criticism. For Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta both, the erotic Prakrit verses provided an occasion for virtuoso interpretation, for them to fill in the contextual details left out of the artfully underdetermined text. But the Kashmirian literary theorists, for all their dependence on these poems, never to my knowledge make explicit the reasons why they are so particularly drawn

to this body of non-Sanskrit literature. Maheśvarānanda, thanks perhaps to his perspective from the outside, is able to argue out the nature of this fascination. Basing himself on the confident linguistic ideology of Sanskrit, he argues that Sanskrit is the prototype or matrix (*prakṛti*) of all other languages, and that Prakrit is a derivative from it, hence its name. It represents a deliberate and studied falling away from Sanskrit's absolute and unchanging standard; there is, he tells us, a certain pleasure that comes from recognizing a poet's ingenuity in using this other, less perfect language, especially its penchant for indeterminacy and equivocation. At the same time, the virtues of Sanskrit, its formal and semantic precision, can still be glimpsed, however dimly, to be at work within it. He calls this Prakrit's *ubhayathā camatkāraucityam*, the way that, seen from either perspective, it is suited to producing *camatkāra*, the sudden, surprised delight the art makes us feel.[28]

Thus, while the MM is a work ostensibly devoted to a systematic theological purpose, it accomplishes this through means that are thoroughly literary. Both ends of the equation here derive from Kashmir, but Maheśvarānanda effects a fusion of them that was never ventured there. There is certainly a critical interanimation within Abhinavagupta's literary-critical and religious and philosophical writings: words and concepts (like the word *camatkāra*, in fact) move from one realm to the other very freely. But still, nothing in his surviving works approaches what the *Mahārthamañjarī* ideally wants itself to be: a deliberate and self-conscious application of literary theory within a work of the religious imagination, one that employs literary-theoretical means to attain visionary ends and promises nothing less than the liberation of the reader who reads it right.

Time and again, the Prakrit verses that form the MM's *mūla* or root text—some of which contain echoes of those that Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta had cited as exempla—are made to bear complex and surprising readings in the commentary, in a way that is clearly a creative extension of the virtuoso interpretations of the *dhvani* critics. What seems to be one thing on the first reading transforms into another, most often grounded in the indeterminacy of the Prakrit text itself.[29] This clearly parallels literary critics' efforts to extract every last drop of a verse's *rasa*, but in Maheśvarānanda's hands this again becomes a writerly rather than readerly suggestion.

This can be seen most clearly in the MM's closing section, and (by now unsurprisingly) in the form of an unacknowledged recasting of Abhinavagupta's *Dhvanyālokalocana*. Here, Maheśvarānanda describes in detail his text's ideal reader, a figure that (he claims) his worldly audience will be transfigured into through the very act of consuming the text. He directly takes his language

from Abhinava's description of the *sahṛdaya*, the connoisseur whose literary intuitions of suggested meaning the *dhvani* critics sought to explain and systematize. In Maheśvarānanda's source, Abhinavagupta plays etymologically on the name *sahṛdaya*, saying that they "partake of the concord in their own hearts" (*svahṛdayasaṃvādabhājaḥ sahṛdayāḥ*).[30] Maheśvarānanda in turn restyles this to describe what happens at the moment that his *yogī*-reader's vision of the world is set right. It is then that they themselves can be said to "partake of their heart's concord." At two different points in the text, as he seeks to describe exactly the moment when the inhibitions of worldly life suddenly fall away, it is in these terms that Maheśvarānanda frames things.[31]

This moment of textual fusion neatly describes a fusion of the two distinct roles of Śaiva adept and cultivated aesthete. And in this explicit attempt to imagine his own community of readers, Maheśvarānanda points to an awareness of the social universe in which the southern synthesis of Kashmirian textuality took place, a decentered virtual community of authors and readers held together by their participation in a shared textual universe. It is not the case that the cosmopolitan world of the ecumenical *sahṛdaya* has here shrunk down to the small circle of sectarian affiliation; instead, both have come to possess an equipollent place in the imagination of this far-flung collectivity. While Maheśvarānanda describes himself as a resident of "that ever-celebrating country of the Colas" (*colās te satatotsavā janapadāḥ*, MMP 195) he does so without reference to any royal court whatsoever.

For all that Maheśvarānanda seems to approach this transformation of his Kashmirian sources in a self-conscious way, and to use this as a means of a thoroughgoing transformation of his readers' sense of themselves, his own *Mahārthamañjarī* was itself transformed in ways that he could scarcely have imagined. Unlike the great majority of South Indian Sanskrit works of its period, the MM managed to find an audience in the far North, in fact in Kashmir itself, an audience that reproduced the text many times over—of the surprisingly large number of manuscripts that survive of the MM, most are from Kashmir, written in either the Śāradā script or the local version of Devanagari. What other manuscripts survive are from the far South and no place else to my knowledge (there are no Gujarati, say, or Bengali script manuscripts). And these two regions, Kashmir and the deep South, are home to two massively different versions of the *Mahārthamañjarī*, a northern and a southern recension.[32]

The northern version of the *Parimala* commentary is much shorter, and indeed simpler, than the southern one, with almost none of the southern text's lengthy asides or digressions. Ordinarily, this would warrant the judgment that

the southern recension was the victim of expansion and interpolation. Yet it is clear that the northern version is inferior and represents a nonauthorial redaction of the long text. The northern version of the Prakrit *mūla*, or root text, however, has fared even more poorly: it is for all intents gibberish. This gibberish, however, is the result of a transmissional process that we can reconstruct with great precision.

Throughout, we can see the problems encountered by a northern copyist faced with a manuscript written probably by a Tamil-speaking scribe in one of the scripts used to write Sanskrit in the far South, either the Grantha script used in the Tamil country or possibly the *āryalipi* script from over the mountains in Kerala. Time and again, the mistakes that can be found in the northern manuscripts that contain the Prakrit text (many do not) can be accounted for by two presumptions. In some cases we may presume a Tamilian copyist transcribing a text being read aloud to him (in a language that he poorly understood, as Prakrit was something cultivated by very few). Many of the mistakes and meaningless variants come from this postulated scribe mistranscribing sounds that were not in the repertoire of his mother tongue. The second presumption is even more thoroughgoing: it finds a Kashmirian scribe tentatively working in an unfamiliar script and ignorant of the way that southern scripts graphically represented Prakrit and Sanskrit in slightly different ways, using the Sanskrit conventions for both languages and in the process writing out a heavily nasalized nonsense that is not Prakrit, Sanskrit, or anything else.[33] Though less dramatic than this, the commentary ends up in an even sadder state in its northern version. The northern redactors of the *Parimala* left only a gloss of the simplest and least interesting meaning of the verses. Gone are almost all of the characteristic asides and linguistic games that make the commentary so interesting, and were really the point of the text, that were essential to Maheśvarānanda's fusion of literary theory and theology. Almost everything is pared away, leaving a text of which the best that can be said of it is that it makes for a quick read.

We can see, then, that the flow of texts from Kashmir to the south was not a one-way process; readers in the far North were interested enough in Maheśvarānanda's text to copy it, indeed to copy it many times over. But the work's life in the North has a certain irony to it. The Prakrit text became so garbled that, although the *Mahārthamañjarī* found itself a place in the home of the *Dhvanyāloka*, its passage through time and space was such that it made it all but unrecognizable, and its Sanskrit explanation was transformed into just a modest *ṭīkā*, in which it is impossible to grasp the real interest of the text or the intentions of its author.

And so it is that we find ourselves in a way back where we began, with the strange, intertwined history of Kashmir's saffron and southern turmeric. Beyond the regional world where it was crafted, the *Mahārthamañjarī* ended up like that anonymous, yellow, astringent stuff that was passed from South India throughout Asia under the name of saffron. But this rather sad fate is in part a testament to the pathbreaking innovation to which the southern recasting of Kashmir's poetic and theoretical achievements gave rise. To adopt—and adapt—yet again the idiom of Pollock's work, we can see that Sanskrit's death in one corner of its immense domain could lead to its surprising rebirth in another.[34]

Abbreviations

EC *Epigraphia Carnatica*. Sk. refers to the inscriptions of Shikarpur Taluq in vol. 7

EI *Epigraphia Indica*

MM *Mahārthamañjarī*

MMP *Mahārthamañjarīparimala*

NM *Nyāyamañjarī*

Notes

[1] 1.21; cf. the similar language and idea seen in 18.16. The reference to Bilhaṇa's birthplace is given in 18.71. The verse may have been an earlier product that Bilhaṇa included in the finished text of his long poem, as it appears as the last of the four "praise for the author" (*granthakartuḥ praśasti*) verses appended to the end of his earlier work, the harem comedy *Karṇasundarī* (*Karṇasundarī* of Bilhaṇa 1932: 56).

[2] The contours of Pollock's argument for the existence and coherence of the Sanskrit cosmopolitan order and its eventual transformation through the emergence of literized vernaculars was first laid out in a series of articles (especially Pollock 1996, 1998a, 1998b), now drawn together into his magnum opus (2006). It is perhaps especially fitting to begin this tribute to Pollock's work in medieval Karnataka, the central test case in his theory of the vernacular cosmopolitanism, and with Bilhaṇa, a poet whose work Pollock has long labored to give the recognition it merits.

[3] For more on Sanskrit literary theory in general, and its Kashmiri component in particular, see the essays by McCrea and Leavitt in this volume.

[4] On courts as the exclusive social venue for the initial stages of vernacularization, see Pollock 1998a: 19ff.; and 1998b: 46. This supposition holds true for his understanding of the domain of Sanskrit literary production as well. See Pollock 2006: 162–88, for his compellingly exhaustive defense of this claim on the Sanskrit side, and especially pages 410–36 on the side of the vernacular. See also the summarizing claim made on page 523: "All the critical innovations in the aestheticization of language and its philologization came from the stimulus offered by court patronage."

[5] Pollock speaks of the late twelfth century—the period of or around the works discussed here—as a time "when the vernacular transformation was everywhere coming into evidence and the older mentality of cosmopolitanism was consequently being thrown into high relief" (2006: 298; he is referring inter alia to the *Bhāvaprakāśana*, discussed below). Still, the rudiments of a literary and cultural-historical periodization of the early second millennium—the period of the active coexistence of Sanskrit and the transformed vernaculars—await clarification.

[6] On this group generally, see Abraham 1988; and Subbarayalu 2004. For saffron

in the opening *praśasti,* as well as the business portion of their records, see, for example, EC 7, Shikarpur 118 (p. 158).

[7] See Hobson-Jobson, s.v. saffron, for the citations from Arabic (ibn Baithar, ca. 1200) and Portuguese (Garcia de Orta, 1563). See Schafer 1963: 125, 185–86, on the long-standing confusion in the T'ang court in China between the two products (both were indifferently called "*yü* gold," and saffron was occasionally distinguished as "*yü* gold aromatic"). The *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. saffron, lists eighteenth-century attestations for both turmeric and "Indian saffron."

[8] Alexis Sanderson (2001: 35–38) has demonstrated that the scriptures of the South Indian Pāñcarātra Vaiṣṇava religion—especially its *Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā* and *Lakṣmītantra*—are directly indebted to the writings of Abhinavagupta's pupil, the Śaiva Kṣemarāja and may thus be dated after him, that is, to sometime after the middle of the eleventh century. That these works were composed in the South can be seen from their borrowing of mantras from versions of the *Yajurveda* that were particularly cultivated there. Religious confession thus did not present a barrier to borrowing and adaptation, indeed to rapid assimilation, as these texts were already well-known and accepted pieces of canonical literature to southern religious professionals by the thirteenth century at the latest; these works were written, introduced as divine revelation, and accepted as such within a few generations' time.

[9] I use this term throughout, as it is the form that appears in the inscriptions themselves as well as in other southern sources (such as the text of the *Pampāmāhātmya* reproduced in Filliozat 2001). As Sanderson (2006) demonstrates, the earliest form of the name (as seen in Nepalese manuscripts as well as Kashmirian exegetical literature) is Kālamukha.

[10] Among these, the most significant are Venkata Subbiah 1917 and Lorenzen 1991.

[11] The two verses' relation was first pointed out to me some years ago by Harunaga Isaacson of the Universität Hamburg. Dezső (2004: xl, n.) notes the close accord between these verses and draws attention to another direct reference to Bāṇa in the *Nyāyamañjarī*.

[12] On Vāmaśakti, see Lorenzen 1991: 123–29. It is possible—though not definite—that a still earlier record in this corpus, EC 7: Sk. 112 (1139 CE), contains an invocation modeled on the *Nyāyamañjarī*'s eleventh opening verse.

[13] For the relationship between kings and sectarian gurus in the Deccan, see also the essay by Rao in this volume.

[14] In addition to the example referred to in note 12 see Sk. 99 (1113 CE, on the Pāśupata/Kālāmukha doctrine, *lakulasya śāsanam*), Sk. 100 (1129 CE, on Gautama, the earlier *adhipati*, in Kannada), and Sk. 103 (1149 CE, again on Gautama, in Sanskrit; a parallel verse [translated below] is used over a decade later in praise of Vāmaśakti, Sk. 103). In 1164 CE, just a few years before the first occurrence of the Jayanta verse, in a single record (Sk. 108), another verse just as closely modeled on

Bāṇa's original was introduced. This, incidentally, finds a parallel in a curious copper plate charter that details a land grant in the Gaṅgavāḍi 96,000 territory, to the east of Banavāse (edited and discussed in Rice 1879). Written in Devanagari and in a mix of Kannada and Sanskrit, it is fragmentary in its opening line, but what can be read of its opening invocation is again clearly modeled on the Bāṇa verse (it reads, *namaḥ śaśikalākoṭikalpamānāṅkura . . . lpakalpavṛkṣāya śambhave*). The record is spuriously dated to Śaka 366 (444 CE) and assigns itself to the reign of the (nonexistent) Cālukya king Vīranoṇamba; presuming that this charter is in fact also a reflex of the same crisis in imperial confidence that can be seen in the Balligāve records in the period ca. 1115–65, we may confirm Rice's brilliant conjectural dating of the record to the first half of the twelfth century (94). This would, however, entail abandoning his suggestion that the actual grantor of the charter be identified with Jayasiṃha III, who had by that time long since launched his unsuccessful rebellion against Vikramāditya VI.

[15] See NM, vol. 1, 649; and *Āgamaḍambara* 2, ll.404–8; 3, vs. 3 etc. Alongside the Buddhists, the crypto-Tantric licentiousness advocated by the Nīlāmbaras presented the greatest challenge to the orthodoxy championed by Jayanta.

[16] Pollock 1989: 21–23. Pollock translates and discusses this "first extended analysis of the *vidyāsthāna*s," rightly noting that Jayanta "operates with a far more restrictive view than the more popular tradition of what should be understood by 'dharma' . . . and so of what may be comprised in the 'branches of knowledge' liable to shastric codification."

[17] Cf. the almost identical verse found in Sk. 103, praising Vāmaśakti's predecessor, Gautama. *dharmānurāgaḥ* is my emendation for *dharmo 'nurāgaḥ*, found in both sources.

[18] Someśvara: Sk. 98 (1103 CE), paralleled in a record from Ablūr (EI 5: 25); Vidyābharaṇa: Sk. 100 (1129 CE). Incidentally, the verse describing Someśvara is in Kannada, while Vidyābharaṇa's is in Sanskrit. It was Fleet, the editor of the Ablūr record, who expressed bewilderment at how a Śaiva logician could be described as a promoter of a Jaina philosopher (EI 5:219n). See also Lorenzen 1991: 111ff.

[19] Compare here especially the complex relation of attraction and subordination that Jayanta shows toward Mīmāṃsā throughout his work. For just a single example of this, see his celebrated opening salvo (NM, vol. 1, 10), which reads, *na ca mīmāṃsakāḥ samyagvedaprāmāṇyarakṣaṇakṣamāṃ saraṇim avalokayituṃ kuśalāḥ. kutarkakaṇṭakanikaraniruddhasañcāramārgābhāsaparibhrāntāḥ khalu te iti vakṣyāmaḥ,* "Further, the Mīmāṃsakas are incapable of seeing the path that allows for the licit defense of the Veda's validity. As I will describe later on, they are well and truly lost on a false road where the way is blocked by the masses of thorns that are [their] specious arguments."

[20] For example, the logic of the inclusion of non-Vaidika religious traditions within the Kālāmukha orbit—a real point of distinction with Jayanta—had a substantial real-

world corollary to it, the seeming ultimate Kālāmukha control over the several Jaina and Bauddha sites within the town's boundaries.

[21] Śāradātanaya was active circa 1175–1250 CE, probably in the *brahmadeya* Uttaramerūr in Kanchipuram district in northeastern Tamilnadu (cf. Pollock 2006: 95; he is mistaken in locating the town near Madurai).

[22] See the list of citations given in Ramaswami Sastri's introduction to his edition of the text (*Bhāvaprakāśana*: 64–67). Not all of Śāradātanaya's source texts are of Kashmirian origin; several of his most important sources are drawn from the literary salons of the Paramāra court at Dhārā, especially the *Daśarūpaka* and the *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*. These works were themselves written under the impress of or in reaction to Kashmirian models.

[23] Later in the same chapter (*Bhāvaprakāśana*: 175), Śāradātanaya epitomizes this missing part of Mammaṭa's text, where he once again alters his source.

[24] The question of the significance of the Prābhākara theory is discussed in Cox 2006: 195–201.

[25] I argue this in Cox 2009.

[26] Much of this section has been adapted from Cox 2006. See now Sanderson 2007 (412–16), which argues that Maheśvarānanda flourished around 1300 CE.

[27] See Sanderson's discussion (2007: 299–307, 333–343) on the Krama works composed in Old Kashmiri.

[28] This summarizes MMP: 185–86.

[29] For several examples of this, see Cox 2006: 205–21.

[30] *Locana ad Dhvanyāloka* 1.1: *yeṣāṃ kāvyānuśīlanābhyāsavaśād viśadībhūte manomukure varṇanīyatanmayībhavanayogyatā te svahṛdayasaṃvādabhājaḥ sahṛdayāḥ*, "Once the mirror of their minds have been polished by constant attention to and study of literature, those who come to possess the ability to identify themselves with the matter under discussion [are called] *sahṛdaya*s, those who partake of the concord in their own hearts." This definition, in fact, is not original to Abhinavagupta (although it is clear that he is Maheśvarānanda's source); that it reflects an earlier understanding can be seen in Kuntaka's very similar phrase *sahṛdayahṛdayasaṃvādasubhagaṃ . . . prayojanāntaram* (*avataraṇikā* to *Vakroktijīvita*, 1.5).

[31] MMP, 145, 167.

[32] This summarizes Cox 2006: 275–78.

[33] See ibid., 278–80. To the example discussed there, it may be added that the text of *gāthā* 4 reads as follows in the southern texts (consensus of E_V 17–18 and A_1 f. 10r, ln. 4–ln. 3v):

jaṃ jāṇaṃti jaḷā api jaḷahārīo pi ja vijāṇaṃti |
jassa ccia jokkāro so kassa phuḍo ṇa hoi kuḷanāho ||

The northern texts, however, read (E_V 16; L f. 3, ln.3–5, errors in boldface):

> *jaṃ jāṇanti janā* ***abhi*** *janahārī* ***abhi*** *jaṃ vijāṇanti |*
> ***jaṃsaṃ*** *cia jokkāro so* ***kaḥsa puṭo*** *na hoi kulanāho ||*
> (*janā abhi*] E; *janā ābi* L [unmetrical]. *janahārī abhi*] E; *janahārī ābi* L [unmetrical])

The errors here are especially significant, as they demonstrate both stages of the transmissional process. The variation between *abhi* and *ābi* in the two northern sources emerges from the problems that a Tamil-speaking copyist (whose mother tongue did not distinguish between *pa* and *ba* graphically and doesn't allow for aspiration at all) would have when transcribing a text being recited to him. This is equally the case with *puṭo* for the correct *phuḍo*. A Kashmirian scribe (or at least one not familiar with southern scripts) compounded the problem, producing *jaṃsaṃ cia* and the bizarre *kaḥsa* (itself the result of a tertiary corruption or mislection) for the correct *jassa ccia* and *kassa*.

[34] The swift decline of Kashmirian Sanskrit literary culture in the generations following Maṅkha (ca. 1140 CE) is detailed in Pollock 2001: esp. 395–400. Whether this moment of disjunction marks the language's "death" in the valley or perhaps just some as yet incompletely diagnosed period of radical change awaits the study it deserves (some of the dimensions of this problem are sketched in Hanneder 2002). Nevertheless it is significant to note that this is almost exactly synchronous with the beginning of most dynamic period of the southern reworking of Kashmirian Sanskrit described here.

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9

Hindi Literary Beginnings

Allison Busch

Theorizing Beginnings in Culture

Sheldon Pollock has challenged many reigning ideas about language, politics, and culture with implications far beyond the field of Sanskrit. In this essay I explore how some of his models may or may not apply to Hindi literature. One important lesson to take from Pollock is that written literary culture—*kāvya*—can and should be dated and the conditions attending its invention tracked. Literary cultures are not autochthonous. They have beginnings.[1] This is a beautifully simple idea, and yet developing a historically coherent statement about literary beginnings is far from straightforward. What if a beginning, for all its apparent self-evidence, is merely an accident of historical preservation? How do literary historians know that a beginning point was not masked, reset by subsequent culture formations? What continuities are elided when we give methodological primacy to rupture?

Literary history is only an imperfect science, one whose methodology favors a telescopic over a fine-tuned lens. Whatever the potential drawbacks, there are undeniable benefits to examining a broad swath of literary activity, reading it for larger trends, and being willing to question received wisdom. Here I propose to examine a large canvas of Hindi literary history to determine when Hindi *kāvya* "entered the world" and the conditions that made it possible. Of course, there need not be just one beginning. Indeed, arguments can be made for various beginning points, depending on what kind of a yardstick we hold up. It seems only fair, then, to warn readers that the very enterprise of searching for Hindi literary beginnings (at least a single beginning) may be doomed. The Hindi language—what to say of Hindi *kāvya*—is a very slippery unit of analysis. Whereas the domain of Sanskrit (its very name—"perfectly made"—a testament to one of its core values of linguistic precision) was carefully controlled through an elaborate grammatical science (*vyākaraṇa*), few people cared to regulate Hindi during the first centuries of its existence. Grammatically systematizing impulses in Hindi emerged only very late and

generally from outside the core tradition, first by a member of the Persian literati, second by an eighteenth-century Gujarati, and later, with much greater force, under colonialism.[2]

It does not help matters that Hindi has a vast geographical domain in comparison to other Indian vernaculars. Uses of Hindi can be tracked from the northernmost reaches of Hindustan to the Deccan, from Gujarat to Bengal. Absent formal standardizing initiatives, each place Hindi went it was marked by regional touches, a fact reflected in the bewildering array of names that accrued to the language (if indeed it can be unproblematically seen as one language). Avadhi, Brajbhasha, Bhasha, Gvaliyari, Madhyadesh ki boli, Gujri, Rajasthani, Pingal, Dingal, Sadhukkari, Hindavi, Hindustani, Dihlavi, Purbi zaban, Dakani and Rekhta are a nonexhaustive list of terms referring to some kind of proto-Hindi (or Urdu) textual culture, and it is far from easy to sort through what particular names meant to the people who used them over the last half millennium or more.[3] If some poets saw their vernacular in terms of a very local perspective, naming it after their town or region, others appear to have been completely unconcerned with labels, and when they did bother with naming they used only generic expressions such as *hindavī* (Indian) or simply *bhāṣā* (language).

Under nationalism, diverse oral traditions, religious poetry, and refined *kāvya* were swept up into the voluminous net of "Hindi" and newly constituted as the literary heritage of the Indian people. The mystical poetry of Sants, vernacular *pad*s (devotional songs) performed in Vaishnava communities, narrative poetry by Sufis in the East and Jains in the West, and martial lore in the *rāso* genre, as well as courtly compositions of stunning complexity, were now to be viewed as part of a single tradition. As we shall explore below, some signs from precolonial writers confirm that the linking of this motley assortment of textual culture is a suspiciously modern phenomenon. Nationalist historiography was conveniently adept at overlooking literary and linguistic disjunctures. The more Hindi the merrier, and the older it was the better.

While recognizing "Hindi literature" to be a constructed category of recent minting, I do not wish to get waylaid by deconstructing it—a theater of operations to which many scholarly forces have in any case already been marshaled. Let us grant the category for heuristic purposes and proceed on our quest for Hindi literary beginnings. I propose to search from four different frames of reference. The first place to look is to the nationalist period and the writings of Ramchandra Shukla, to whom the now dominant mode of conceptualizing Hindi literary history can be traced. How were beginnings

understood at the moment of inception of the modern category of Hindi literature? A second way of measuring is to search for the first major work of Hindi literature. The most convincing case, we will discover, can be made for a text in Avadhi produced by Sufis in the fourteenth century. Is the first known example of Hindi literature (what an embarrassment for Hindi wallahs!) actually by a Muslim? By the late sixteenth century the Avadhi *kāvya* tradition would begin to give way to that of Brajbhasha, a different literary dialect that rose to prominence under conditions of Mughal power. This is our third case study, and here we do not measure absolute beginnings but instead observe a major act of resetting the dial on the clock of literary history. A last phase of our thought experiment will be to examine precolonial perspectives: where did traditional Hindi scholars think their literature began?

While mapping Hindi literary beginnings we will be touching on critical issues in the theorization of premodern textual culture, including indexes of literary change, what Indian tradition has counted as *kāvya*, and the milieu(s) in which it was produced. We will also pause to reflect on that favorite of Pollock topics, vernacularization, and what proves to be complicated about the case of Hindi.

Case Study 1. Nationalism and the Mysterious Case of Hindi's Nonbeginning

Hindi, unlike Sanskrit, possesses no ethno-historical account of a single universally recognized *ādikavi* (first poet), which means there is no consensus about where to begin the beginning.[4] Ramchandra Shukla, the first to write a self-consciously modern history of Hindi literature in Hindi, began his account by trying to trace—reasonably enough—an *ādikāl* (beginning period), which he dated to 993–1318 CE (Vikram Saṃvat, 1050–1375).[5] Less reasonable is his category of "Hindi," which seems altogether too capacious and undefined, as evident from remarks such as "the language of the credible surviving material is Apabhramsha, i.e. Prakrit-inflected ... Hindi," and he devotes nearly half of his discussion of Hindi literary beginnings to Apabhramsha poetry, mobilizing various fragmentary scraps of Middle Indic language that in some cases even he hesitates to call literature.[6] I would hesitate to call many of them Hindi.

This study of Hindi literary beginnings has just begun, and already it is beset by obstacles. We can hardly expect to find the origins of Hindi literature if our lens is not even focused on Hindi. Much ink has been spilled since Shukla's day in debates over early Hindi literature; no fewer than three books bear the title *Hindī sāhitya kā ādikāl* (The Beginning Period of Hindi Literature),[7] and virtually every historian of Hindi since Shukla seems to feel the need

to include a chapter on the *ādikāl*. But all this attention to beginnings has failed to generate much thinking about what Hindi literature is, why it should suddenly begin, and who the agents of this process might have been. In the typical nationalist formulation, Hindi literary history has been constructed as an unremarkable sequence of vernacularizing iterations as the language came down the pipeline from Sanskrit, making various stopovers in Apabhramsha. At a certain point, it is felt, the literary language of the plains of North India ceased being Apabhramsha and started to be *purānī hindī* (Old Hindi). A few scholars seemingly dub as Hindi whatever non-Sanskrit North Indian poetry they can get their hands on. Thus, the works of Apabhramsha poets such as Svayambhu (700–950?) and Pushpadant (tenth century) are presented as Hindi *kāvya*.[8] My point is not to dismiss the idea that Apabhramsha was a significant storehouse of literary models for early Hindi poets, which it demonstrably was, especially in western India, but to highlight that the languages are different, and that the transition from Apabhramsha needs to be marked as a moment of vernacularization.[9]

Another problem with scholarship on the *ādikāl* is that even when Apabhramsha poetry is not being smuggled in, scholars do not always feel the need to furnish evidence of an actually existing text. Hazari Prasad Dvivedi, one of the leading Hindi critics in the generation after Shukla, was more honest than most about the fact that no major Hindi works produced in the Gangetic Plain survive before the fourteenth century.[10] Perhaps the most acute problem with the modern tradition of Hindi historiography is, however, the nationalist presumption that Hindi literature should exist and that it more or less always has.

A question begged by the above discussion but not yet addressed is, what is Hindi *kāvya*? Does any surviving text in Middle Indic get to count as Hindi literature? Even for Shukla, apparently not. Regarding the sayings attributed to early Siddhas and Yogis, Shukla proclaimed, "These are only sectarian teachings, therefore they cannot be considered in the category of pure literature."[11] Here he raises the vexing question of what to do with religious texts. Are they *kāvya* or not? Sheldon Pollock would be perfectly in agreement with Shukla in excluding religious teachings from the category of *kāvya*, by which he (and in his reading, the Indian tradition itself) meant a self-consciously aesthetic, and often political, project. Hazari Prasad Dvivedi would vehemently disagree. Stating that "the dominant ethos of medieval literature was religious,"[12] he criticized Shukla for drawing the line between religion and literature arbitrarily. Shukla was indeed inconsistent in according the status of *kavi* to religious poets. Still, he can hardly be said to have

ignored religious texts, even if he preferred some poets (Sur, Tulsi) to others (Kabir).[13] After all, in his pioneering history he devoted an entire period—the *bhaktikāl*—to religious trends in Hindi literature, a rubric that carries much weight to this day.

If Shukla was hesitant about counting some religious poetry as *kāvya*, the Hindi scholarly community, particularly in the West, often seems to have operated from the premise that *only* religious verses have ever counted as literature. Most of Hindi's premodern courtly legacy remains untranslated, and untheorized.[14] Here we enter the orbit of Pollock's well-known if controversial concern that too much of Indian cultural history has been unreflectively tied to religious currents, without considering the role played by courts and political formations.[15] Let us keep in mind these debates about the relationship between religion and *kāvya* as we continue on our search for Hindi literary beginnings.

The name "Hindi" (often "Hindavi" in premodernity) is well known to be of Persian origin, and it is worth asking what bearing, if any, this "outsider" label has on the early history of Hindi *kāvya*. Highly suggestive are some signs of Hindi literary beginnings from Indo-Muslim circles of the Ghaznavid and Sultanate periods. Although he was predominantly a Persian poet, some spectacularly early Hindi writings are attributed to Masud Sad Salman (1046–1121), active at the court of Mahmud of Ghazni. Unfortunately, his viability as a candidate for Hindi's *ādikavi* is seriously compromised by the failure of his Hindi corpus to survive. All we have to go by is Muhammad Aufi's less than trustworthy reference to Masud Sad Salman's putative Hindi *dīvān* a full century later in *Lubāb al-albāb* (Essence of Wisdom).[16] More famous—but, it should be stressed, no more reliably attested—are the Hindavi songs attributed to Amir Khusrau (1253–1325), who was active at the court of Delhi in the early fourteenth century. Visitors to the Chishti tomb of Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi can still hear *qawwali* performances featuring Hindi compositions by Amir Khusrau. But quite apart from their ghostly historical presence, the songs of Khusrau may not pass the entrance exam for anything that can be called *kāvya*—defined as written literary culture. Khusrau himself evidently did not consider his Hindavi compositions very important if he never bothered to record them: his only surviving poetry is in Persian.[17]

Similarly elusive are other striking memories of early Indo-Muslim engagement with vernacular poetry in Sufi circles. The renditions of Nizami attributed to Shaikh Hamiduddin (ca. 1192–1274) of Nagaur, if authentic, would be "almost the first explicit textual record of Hindi poetry," but they did not survive in any form that would be consistent with a thirteenth-century provenance.[18] Early compositions are also traced to Baba Farid (1175–1265),

but we have only questionable evidence for them prior to their inclusion in the early Sikh canon several centuries later. Christopher Shackle sums up his skepticism about a thirteenth-century date by wondering why the Sufi *malfūẓāt* literature, otherwise so keen to attest Farid's accomplishments, "should have failed to mention the existence of the *Farīd-bānī* (Sayings of Farid) if it were authentic."[19]

We need to take serious cognizance of the sheer amount of anecdotal evidence we have about Muslim courts and Sufi centers at the very dawn of North India's vernacular literary inauguration. Why would there be so many attributions if there were no Muslim Hindi poets? Why did so many biographers consider it a mark of distinction for great literati and Sufis to write vernacular poetry if they did not actually do so? Nonetheless, in looking for the beginnings of Hindi *kāvya* there need to be some ground rules. We are seeking a text that is actually extant, *written* literary culture, not songs, a text that in some sense can be seen to have helped to constitute a major tradition. By "major" I stipulate that we are not looking for a few fragments of poetry from the oral tradition; nor should we count just any obscure early work that might be rustled up out of a Jain *bhaṇḍār* after having been forgotten for centuries.[20] The criterion is not that the work survives but that it be consequential. *Kāvya* is not *kāvya* unless a literary community reads it and constitutes it as such.

Case Study 2. Avadhi: the Noncosmopolitan Vernacular

The inauguration of the Avadhi literary tradition is far less speculative and more amenable to theorization than any of the possible beginning points we have considered so far. Although not recognized as innovators by modern Hindi critics (or their premodern counterparts, as we shall observe in our fourth case study below), if the aim is to locate the first major extant Hindi text, as opposed to putative Hindi texts, instances of fragmentary poetry, insecurely dated texts, or songs, the *Candāyan* (Story of Cāndā, 1379) of Maulana Daud is an excellent candidate for Hindi's *ādikāvya*. It is hard to argue against either the earliness or importance of the work, which relayed in lengthy narrative form the story of legendary lovers Lorik and Cāndā in an unprecedented idiom, in the process helping to constitute an Avadhi literary tradition.[21] (A cautionary note: since Daud refers to other tales of love, we must recognize that the *Candāyan* is a beginning point only in the sense that related earlier beginning points do not survive, but my preference here is to treat only the historical record and not to factor in lost texts.) Furthermore, the *Candāyan* was by every measure a literary success: it was read, copied, performed, and illustrated by posterity. Another measure of the work's status is that it gave

rise to important successors in the Avadhi language, including not only other Sufi works but also the *Rāmcaritmānas* of Tulsidas, the most widely circulated Hindi text in premodernity.[22]

Now that we have marked a point of Hindi literary beginning with an actually surviving major text, let us outline the patronage conditions that gave rise to it and its literary and lexical profile. Maulana Daud, who was patronized by Juna Shah, a minister of Firoz Shah Tughlaq,[23] presented his pioneering Avadhi work to the nobility at Dalmau. This makes him courtly. But Daud also belonged to the Chishti community, and this dual Sufi-courtly identity generally characterizes Muslim authors of the genre.[24] The Avadhi *premākhyān*s (love stories), as these works came to be known, had multiple uses. To courtly patrons they were a vehicle for aesthetic pleasure, but to the initiated the very same texts encoded subtle mystical meanings. When it comes to literary patronage and reception, the role of religion and courts, it turns out, cannot be so easily separated.

Another matter to consider in assessing Avadhi's vernacularization profile is the relevance of superposition, the process by which a dominant cosmopolitan language—Sanskrit in the examples studied by Sheldon Pollock—exerts a defining influence on a fledgling vernacular literary tradition. One clear model for the Sufi *premākhyān*s is the Persian *maṡnavī* (narrative poem).[25] Such poems begin, as all *maṡnavī*s do, with praises to Allah and the prophet, followed by eulogies to kings and spiritual leaders. But aside from the introductions, the *maṡnavī* origin of these Avadhi works is less clear. The texts' characteristic *dohā-caupaī* (couplet and quatrain) metrical structure, for instance, has roots in Apabhramsha. And when it comes to expressing the dominant theme of love, the poets use an idiom of mixed heritage. Sanskrit aesthetic principles such as *rasa* are prominent, but this attention to literary emotion is repurposed to facilitate a distinctly Sufi religiosity.[26] Additionally, the lexical profile of the Sufi *premākhyān*s, far from exhibiting evidence of superposition, is notable for being *neither* Sanskritized nor Persianized in any meaningful way. Avadhi Sufi *kāvya* is thus a departure from the more common profile of a "cosmopolitan vernacular" that Pollock has tracked elsewhere in the region.[27]

Case Study 3. Brajbhasha Literary Origins

So far we have looked for Hindi literary beginnings in two ways. We have rejected the suggestion that Hindi literature was actually Apabhramsha literature until it one day ceased to be that and mysteriously became Hindi instead. The second way of marking Hindi literary beginnings was to seek

out the first major surviving work of *kāvya*, which was written by a Sufi in Dalmau. Whereas the Avadhi *kāvya* tradition flourished under the regional sultanates that controlled eastern India from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, a new Mughal political system would now help to underwrite the rise of Brajbhasha literary culture.

Brajbhasha literature, like Avadhi before it, entered the world due to both courtly and religious circumstances. Some preliminary signs of Braj literariness can be traced to Vishnudas, who a full century before the Braj efflorescence of the Mughal period wrote vernacular reworkings of the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* for the Tomar kings of Gwalior: the *Pāṇḍav-carit* (1435) and *Rāmāyaṇ-kathā* (1442). Although these efforts failed to generate a sustained tradition or to imprint themselves in literary memory—the name Vishnudas was virtually unknown to the Braj community in the precolonial period—his epics are arresting as precocious instances of courtly Braj that to some degree imitated cosmopolitan style.[28]

A stream of Brajbhasha literature of far greater consequence originates from Mathura and Vrindavan by the mid–sixteenth century, where newly crystallizing religious communities, especially the Vallabhans and Gaudiyas, were engaged in establishing constituencies of Krishna worshippers with their spiritual center the place they believed Krishna to have spent his youth during his sojourn on earth. Bhakti poets, the most famous being Surdas, cultivated a devotional genre—the Brajbhasha *pad*—the singing of which became a crucial part of congregational worship in Vaishnava settings.

The Braj efflorescence of the Mughal period is not only linked to the activities of Krishna devotees, however. Just forty miles away from Mathura was the Mughal capital at Agra, making the Braj region a site of direct imperial concern. The development of Braj as a religious site had the support of the Mughal emperor, as well as the Rajput kings who served the cause of empire. A spate of temple building in the region was backed by imperial edicts, the costs underwritten by Rajput rulers who were jostling for positions of power in the evolving Mughal state system.[29]

This nexus of religious and courtly developments is a crucial backdrop for understanding the cultural positioning of Keshavdas (ca. 1555–1617) and Orchha, the court from which he hailed. Keshavdas is considered the founder of Hindi's *rīti* (courtly) tradition and is thus a promising figure when it comes to reconnoitering for the beginnings of Hindi *kāvya*. As it turns out, many types of beginning can be traced to Orchha in the sixteenth century. There are courtly beginnings: the site was founded by the Bundela king Rudra Pratap in 1531. We can identify the religious beginnings that attended the dynasty's

conversion from Shaivism to Vaishnavism.[30] Political and literary conversions are also in evidence. When Madhukar Shah proved unable to withstand Akbar's armies, Orchha was absorbed by the Mughal state, and the princes, like so many rulers of the day, would now be forced to take up positions in the imperial system. At the very same time (ca. 1580) Keshavdas, who was descended from a long line of Sanskrit scholars, gave up his family tradition to become a Brajbhasha poet.[31]

While some of Keshavdas's poems can certainly be located in the ambit of a bhakti worldview, his oeuvre as a whole marks a major departure from the Braj *pad*s that were circulating in his day, and it is for this reason that it can be evaluated as an instance of Hindi literary beginnings. In striking contrast to the hybrid texts of earlier Avadhi poets, Keshavdas's writings are a classic example of the types of vernacular appropriations from Sanskrit theorized by Pollock. The poet's choice of genres, style, and lexicon all exhibit dramatic degrees of Sanskrit superposition. Although Keshavdas preferred to write his *kāvya* in Brajbhasha, he was well versed in Sanskrit and thus ideally situated to be the kind of classicizing poet that characterizes so much of vernacular literarization in South Asia. He is most famous for his *Rasikpriyā* (Handbook for Poetry Connoisseurs, 1591), which alongside the companion volume *Kavipriyā* (Handbook for Poets, 1601) drew heavily on Sanskrit sources (particularly Rudrabhatta and Dandin), and served as the foundation for a whole new field of Hindi *alaṅkāraśāstra* (literary theory). With the *Rāmcandracandrikā* (The Moonlight of Lord Rām, 1601), a sophisticated retelling of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and *Vīrsiṃhdevcarit* (Deeds of King Vīrsiṃh, 1607), an elaborate biography of his patron Bir Singh Deo, Keshavdas transplanted both Sanskrit *mahākāvya* and its close cousin *praśasti kāvya* (political poetry) into Brajbhasha, inventing a new, elevated form of vernacular royal expression. Similarly elegant and unprecedented in Brajbhasha is Keshavdas's last work, *Jahāngīrjascandrikā* (Moonlight of the Fame of Jahāngīr, 1612), a *praśasti* in honor of the Mughal emperor Jahangir.

Working in a distinct milieu from poets like Surdas, whose songs were expressions of piety and whose early manuscript heritage is closely linked to performance traditions, Keshavdas created a self-consciously literary corpus of *kāvya* works for an elite courtly audience.[32] He drew on a rich array of Sanskrit themes and classical figures (*alaṅkāra*s). His *kāvya* register, with its heavy infusion of *tatsama* (unmodified loanwords) vocabulary, is in places so Sanskritized that one can barely tell the poet—a Brahmin pandit by birth and literary temperament—is using vernacular language at all.[33] Adopting such a register could not be more dissimilar from the studious avoidance of

cosmopolitan lexical style by Sufi authors. Nobody before Keshavdas had ever employed Hindi for such an array of elevated literary, scholarly, and political purposes. The courtly literary trends he helped to initiate were also an instant success: for close to 250 years, Braj *kāvya* would find an enthusiastic reception at both Mughal and Rajput courts.

Although much about Brajbhasha literary culture substantiates Pollock's vision of vernacularization, a few complicating factors should be noted. Brajbhasha, like Avadhi, is closely tied to *both* courts and religious contexts, accommodating the cultural needs of diverse constituencies. Another difference stems from the high status of Persian in Mughal India. If Sufi poets of the Avadhi tradition mostly avoided Persian words in their works, quite the opposite holds for many (though by no means all) Brajbhasha writers, some of whom had Mughal patrons. The last work of even a conservative and highly Sanskritizing Brahmin poet such as Keshavdas was set in a Mughal court context and contains a few striking examples of Persianized *praśasti* style.[34] Titles and other ways of expressing kingly grandeur had long been superposed from Sanskrit, but new possibilities would now open up for Brajbhasha writers, who in some cases drew freely from both Persian and Sanskrit. When it came to literary genres and emphases, however, Braj poets did not generally stray very far from earlier Sanskrit codes. In fact, despite the close contact of at least some Braj writers with Indo-Muslim court culture, ultimately not much from Persian literature made it into the Braj repertoire.[35] The Indic norms of bhakti, *śṛṅgāra* (love), and *praśasti kāvya* remained dominant. This was true even for Muslim poets such as Rahim, Raskhan, and Raslin. Thus, Persian cosmopolitanism did have its limits.

Case Study 4. Precolonial Visions of Literary Beginnings

We have now outlined some key points about both the Avadhi and Braj streams of Hindi literature and considered how each marks a moment of vernacular inauguration with different relationships to the superposed languages of Sanskrit and Persian. Another way to look for Hindi *kāvya*'s beginning point is to consider evidence of such thematizations by premodern poets and scholars. Modern literary historians should not be the only ones who get to decide where the important beginnings are. Since so much changed during the colonial period in the domain of Indian literary habits and cultural memory, a particular value accrues to canvassing earlier authors.

An unambiguous articulation of Hindi literary beginnings can be found in the *Satkavigirāvilās* (Play of the Language of True Poets, ca. 1750), a poetry anthology compiled by Baldev Mishra at the court of Vikram Shah in

Baghelkhand (in eastern Madhya Pradesh). The author states:

> Taking definitions and example poems from the first poets Keshavdas, Cintamani, Matiram and Sukhdev, and those who are discriminating literatteurs when it comes to *rasa*, I have composed this work of *rasa* and *nāyikābheda*, bringer of aesthetic delight.[36]

Note how Keshavdas heads the list of first poets, a mark of his chronological antecedence, no doubt, but also evidently his status as a founder of the tradition. To my knowledge, Baldev Mishra's explicit discussion of *ādikavi*s is unique, but other writers do hint at their views on when their literature began. The poet Sudan, Baldev's approximate contemporary, introduces his *Sujāncaritra* (Deeds of Sujan Singh) with a traditional *kavi-praśaṃsā* (salute to past poets) that tellingly commences with Keshavdas.[37] Other important evidence of conscious reflection about the Hindi past is found in the *Kāvyanirṇay* (Verdict on Literature, 1746) of Bhikharidas.

> Sur, Keshav, Mandan, Bihari, Kalidas [Trivedi], Brahma [Birbal],
> Cintamani, Matiram and Bhushan are recognized,
> Liladhar, Senapati, Nipat [Niranji] Newaj and Nidhi,
> Nilkanth Mishra, Sukhdev and Dev are respected
> Alam, Rahim, Raskhan, Sundar, etc.
>
> So many isightful poets! They cannot all be listed here.
> One need not live in Braj to write in Braj,
> for one can learn the language from these poets of the past.
> Tulsi and Gang, whose works are varied in language,
> became the master poets (*sukabina ke sardāra*).[38]

Bhikharidas's enumeration of poets does not follow a strictly chronological order (nor can the logic behind every aspect of the sequencing of names be easily parsed),[39] but to begin with the sixteenth-century poet Surdas, followed closely by Keshavdas, would appear to signal literary beginnings.

This triad of contemporary Braj authors from disparate eighteenth-century courts can reasonably be considered a quorum for rendering a verdict about precolonial literary canons. Several points are of note. Briefly revisiting Baldev Mishra's comments about the *ādikavi*s, it is worth highlighting that all four of them are Brahmin court poets. So are most of the other thirty-one figures to make it into his anthology. The lists of Sudan and Bhikharidas, however, also contain bhakti poets. Bhikharidas, for his part, provides more clues about his understanding of literature in his telling revision of a famous verse from Mammata's *Kāvyaprakāśa* on the subject of the purpose of poetry.

> Some acquire religious merit, such as the spiritual masters Tulsi and Sur.
> Others seek wealth, in the manner of Keshavdas, Bhushan, and Birbal.
> A few concern themselves with fame alone, like Raskhan and Rahim.
> Says [Bhikhari] Das, discussing poetry is in every case pleasing to scholars.[40]

It is beyond doubt that here and elsewhere in his *Kāvyanirṇay* Bhikharidas is drawing on Mammata.[41] But whereas for Mammata *kāvya* is an entirely secular pursuit (his reasons include fame, wealth, instruction, practical knowledge, warding off illness, and aesthetic rapture), Bhikharidas considers spiritual gain one of three primary rationales.[42] That he took the trouble to rewrite Mammata's verse dramatically underscores this crucial shift in conceptions of the literary between Sanskrit and Hindi.

Also note who is missing from these eighteenth-century canons. None of the low-caste Sant poets like Ravidas or Kabir made it onto any of the lists. We never hear of the Rajasthani poetess Mira Bai, now one of the most famous figures of the precolonial Hindi tradition. The Sufi writers are ignored. No Khusrau is mentioned, nor is any other early Indo-Muslim vernacular poet from the Ghaznavid or Sultanate period. Clearly no attempt was made to exclude Muslim poets, given the presence of Raskhan and Rahim. A pattern does emerge, however. All the poets listed here wrote in Braj, and all are from the Mughal period.[43] Earlier poets, or those using other Hindi dialects, were either unknown or somehow irrelevant, not considered part of the same community. When poets like Bhikharidas, heir to the Sanskrit literary system (albeit owing a few debts to Persian, as well), delivered their verdict on *kāvya*, they evidently did not view it as an open category in the manner of modern Hindi critics.

There are of course different types of memory from those recorded by court poets of the eighteenth century. Although Avadhi writers did not leave us with any major statement of their literary self-understanding, Vaishnavas were avid canonizers, giving rise to an entire genre—the *bhaktamālā* (garland of devotees)—that memorialized the most illustrious members of their tradition. Still, for Nabhadas, author of the most popular example (early seventeenth century), or his famous commentator Priyadas (fl. 1712), the point was to praise lovers of god, not to compile a canon of Hindi poets. The same holds true for the texts of the Dadupanthis (followers of the Sant poet Dadu), who were prolific hagiographers and anthologizers.[44] While the evidence of Bhikharidas makes clear that religious poetry was not excluded from literary theorization—indeed, traditional Sanskrit *alaṅkāraśāstra* had to be updated in order to make the point—the fact is that many bhakti texts were organized

as song repertoires for worshipful performance and were thus distinct from *kāvya* in their use and production context.

Conclusion

Much in today's scholarly milieu would militate against the restrictions on admission to the category of *kāvya* that were once so central to the Sanskrit thought world. Should the *vāṇī* (sayings) of an oral poet like Kabir be considered literature? Are bhaktas to be considered *kavis*? They already are, so the point seems moot. What remains far from moot, however, is the task of evaluating the histories and self-conceptions of the various communities in South Asia that entered the domain of vernacular literariness, in the process creating powerful new aesthetic, religious, and political spaces.

Here we have surveyed a range of contenders for (and pretenders to) the throne of Hindi literary beginnings. It is not clear that a single candidate emerges as worthy of the crown, and no doubt other beginning points could be suggested than the ones considered here.[45] Beginnings are inevitably contestable, but some have more credence than others. In the case of Hindi, perhaps the most dramatic and significant beginning point, or at least the one remembered as such, is the spectacular rise of Brajbhasha literary culture during the sixteenth century. Still, this beginning may be overly exclusionary. It stems from within the Brahminical thought world that created Sanskrit *kāvya*, of which Brajbhasha can be considered an early modern incarnation.

One blind spot in the literary culture's own emic representation obscures the role of Indo-Muslims in fostering some of the earliest vernacularizing ambitions in North India. Although the surviving textual evidence is less than satisfactory, cultural memory about select Ghaznavid and Sultanate period writers suggests a close connection between Muslim literati and inaugural vernacularity early in the second millennium.[46] And it was a Muslim writer, Maulana Daud, who put pen to paper in Dalmau in 1379, in the process giving shape to a new Avadhi literary tradition that would prove to have tremendous prestige far beyond the realm of Sufi *khānqāh*s (residences) and Sultanate courts. Muslim agency can even be seen to have played a pivotal role in the inauguration of Braj *kāvya* since the *rīti* tradition spearheaded by Keshavdas began during the exact period when his patrons at the Orchha court first entered the sphere of Mughal politics. The new political and cultural positioning of his court was almost certainly a factor in Keshavdas's openness to literary newness, and his ability to break with previous Sanskrit tradition. Brajbhasha, even if largely a Brahminical enterprise in terms of its sociohistorical profile and textual orientation, was consolidated as a literary tradition only from

Mughal times, and this was a process facilitated not just by Hindu temple communities but by the patronage of the imperial court, Indo-Muslim elites, and Rajput noblemen who were closely tied to Mughal ways.[47]

Language and literary practices undergo real caesuras and participate in the cultural articulations of new power formations. This is not to suggest a purely instrumental relationship between aesthetics and power. The connection is often far from straightforward. But it exists nonetheless, and when we survey the various possible beginning points for Hindi literature, we find that inaugurations are generated precisely by the types of people who would not have been overly attached to the older Sanskritic ways of being literary, whether by a Sufi in Dalmau or a poet like Keshavdas, whose patrons ruled from an arriviste court at Orchha in Bundelkhand.[48] We can track a similar rupture much earlier in South Asian history. Sanskrit political inscription was invented by Shaka and Kushana immigrants of the Northwest who were not wedded to *vaidika* culture, and when Rudradaman wrote the elaborate Junagarh rock inscription of ca. 150 CE he carved out a new domain of usage for Sanskrit that was wholly unlike what existed before.[49]

Cultural memory can be forgetful. In the Sanskrit world Valmiki was remembered as the *ādikavi*, but Rudradaman, the first recorded writer of *praśasti*, was forgotten by posterity. In the case of precolonial Hindi writers, Brajbhasha was enshrined as the carrier of *kāvya*, with the poets Surdas and Keshavdas celebrated as inaugurators by their successors. The Avadhi *premākhyān*s, which in hindsight can be seen, with good reason, as the Hindi tradition's first major surviving expressive texts, were completely ignored in the canons forged by the eighteenth-century Brahmin literati of North India. In another iteration of canon formation in the early twentieth century exemplified by Shukla, we see further acts of forgetfulness in the positing of an exclusively pre-Muslim Apabhramsha origin for Hindi. Aside from the nationalist imperative to antiquate, when Hindi and Urdu had been fully communalized as Hindu and Muslim, it must have seemed unthinkable that the first signs of Hindi literary activity could be by Muslims.

Another concern of this essay has been to probe the role of political formations and cultural superposition in vernacular literary beginnings. Much in the foregoing would underscore the importance of courts in the shaping of early Hindi *kāvya*, although they were not the sole determinants in the case of either Avadhi or Braj, where Sufi religiosity and Vaishnavism also had critical roles to play. In the case of Avadhi poets, who gave Persian *maṣnavī*s and Sufi tenets a new local flavor by drawing on Indic ingredients, we saw something that looked less like superposition and more like hybridity. It is

usual to think of vernacularization as operating across a single frontier zone (thus French poets emulated the high language of Latin and Kannada writers turned to Sanskrit classics). In medieval and early modern North India, however, the status of Sanskrit was counterbalaced by Persian, and in some cases Apabhramsha, which is to say that superposition needs to be seen as a multipolar phenomenon. Avadhi and Brajbhasha writers responded differently to the cultural choices before them, particularly in their ways of engaging with Persian and Sanskrit literary models. Ironically, it was the Braj poets—mostly Brahmins—who chose on occasion a style marked by superposed Persian vocabulary. The Muslim Sufi writers of Avadh by and large avoided it.

What other aspects of the North Indian case complicate Pollock's magisterial theories of vernacularization? His detailed study of Kannada vernacularization gave rise to the useful concept of a "cosmopolitan vernacular" that takes many of its literary cues from the superposed language and in so doing lends prestige and dignity to an emergent regional system of culture-power.[50] The breakdown of the cosmopolitan order in the "vernacular millennium" was triggered by the rise of new regional ways, in new regional polities. Quite distinct from the Sanskrit ecumene, being cosmopolitan in a vernacular sense did not mean being *spatially* cosmopolitan. Brajbhasha was different. While it never traveled to Southeast Asia or enveloped the entire subcontinent, the Braj literary system (and this is true of Hindi broadly) was transregional, serving the needs of various political and religious formations across enormous expanses of territory. These transregional aspirations suggest, among other things, that Hindi's claims for the status of official language in the modern period are not solely based on nationalist mythologizing but stem from a much earlier cultural pattern. One thing is clear: whether or not we can agree on its moment of entry into culture, Hindi literature not only began but thrived in multiple communities during the vernacular millennium, superseding the powerful cosmopolitan formations that helped to shape it.

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Notes

[1] Pollock 2006: 283–98.

[2] The *Tuḥfat al-hind*, a Persian treatise on Brajbhasha, was produced ca. 1675 for a Mughal readership (Ziauddin 1935); on Indo-Persian philology more generally, see the essay by Kinra in this volume. Françoise Mallison (2011) records the existence of a Braj grammar from Bhuj dating to 1717. Fort William College's interventions in the case of Hindi and Hindustani are too well known to need rehearsing here.

[3] For a useful attempt to sift through some of this nomenclatural morass in a quest for Urdu's literary antecedents, see Faruqi 2003: 806ff.

[4] On Sanskrit's *ādikavi* and the tradition's self-consciousness about literary beginnings, see Pollock 2006: 77ff.

[5] Shukla's *Hindī sāhitya kā itihās* (History of Hindi Literature), first published in 1929, remains authoritative today for its four-part division of the tradition into *ādi* (beginning), *bhakti* (devotional), *rīti* (courtly), and *ādhunik* (modern) periods (1994: 1).

[6] *"Asandigdh sāmgrī jo kuch prāpt hai, uskī bhāṣā apabhraṁś arthāt prākṛtābhās … hindī hai"*(ibid., 3). Shukla discusses Apabhramsha *kāvya* on pages 5–16.

[7] Dvivedi 1994; Saksena 1997; Varma 1988.

[8] For the tendency of Hindi scholars to elide the boundary between Hindi and Apabhramsha, see Dvivedi 1994: 11–18; and Gupta 1994: 53–55. Pollock, for his part, is clear that Apabhramsha was never treated in the same manner as vernaculars such as Kannada or Gujarati. The classical thought world theorized it as one of a "closed set" (including Prakrit and Sanskrit) of literary languages (2006: 89–105).

[9] Apabhramsha influence on Hindi (particularly in terms of meter and genre) is stressed by McGregor (2001; 1984: chap. 2). Cf. de Bruijn 2005:45–46.

[10] Dvivedi 1994: 21, 40.

[11] Shukla 1994: 12.

[12] *Madhyayug ke sāhitya kī pradhān preṇā dharmsādhnā hī rahī hai* (Dvivedi 1994: 24).

[13] A discussion of Shukla's dismissive approach to Kabir and later interventions by scholars such as Hazari Prasad Dvivedi and the Dalit critic Dharmvir is Wakankar 2006.

[14] It is telling that until less than a decade ago the only regular scholarly venue in the West for discussing precolonial Hindi literature was known by the nickname "the bhakti conference."

[15] Pollock 1998: 29–31.

[16] Faruqi (2003: 819–21) and McGregor (1984: 8) consider Masud Sad Salman's Hindi *dīvān* an important moment of vernacular literary beginnings. However, Mirza Muhammad Qazwini (1905: 700–701) long ago discredited the idea that Masud Sad Salman could have written a Hindi *dīvān*. I am grateful to Rebecca Gould for the reference and for sharing her insights about this early Ghaznavid poet. On his Persian oeuvre, see Sharma 2000.

[17] Whether or not modern scholars would agree, the Sanskrit tradition considered *kāvya* a separate domain from song (Pollock 1998: 8–9; 2006: 299–303). Doubts about Khusrau's Hindi oeuvre as extant today, and about whether he considered Hindi a serious literary medium, are outlined in Faruqi 2003: 820–21; and McGregor 1984: 24–26.

[18] McGregor 1984: 23.

[19] Shackle 1993: 269.

[20] For two lists of obscure early manuscripts unearthed from *bhaṇḍārs* in the last century, see Gupta 1976; and Singh 1964: 8. On the grounds of their apparently not being read by or otherwise known to Hindi posterity over the centuries, I skip over texts such as the *Bharateśvar bāhubalī rās* of Muni Shalibhadra Suri (1148), the *Pradyumnacarit* of Sadharu (1354?), and the *Haricand Purāṇa* of Jakhu Maniyar (1396). By the same logic it is difficult to include early authors such as Vishnudas from the Tomar court of Gwalior who were given more weight by McGregor (1984: 35–38, 103, 122) and, following him, Pollock (2006: 393–95).

[21] As noted by McGregor (2003: 915).

[22] Behl 2007. On motifs shared between the Sufi *kāvya*s and the *Rāmcaritmānas*, see de Bruijn 2005.

[23] Sreenivasan 2007: 34 (referencing Badauni).

[24] On Daud and Manjhan, see Behl and Weightman 2000: xiv–v. The latter, author of *Madhumālatī*, was a Shattari Sufi employed by Islam Shah Sur (r. 1545–54). Other *premākhyān*s written by Sufis have a similar courtly provenance. Qutuban, a member of the Suhravardi order, presented his *Mirigāvatī* (Story of the Doe-Eyed Woman, 1503) at the court of Shah Husain Shah Sharqi of Jaunpur. Jayasi, author of *Padmāvat* (Story of Padmāvatī, 1540) and a Chishti, wrote praise poems to Islam Shah's father Sher Shah Sur (r. 1540–45).

[25] Behl and Weightman 2000: xv.

[26] Behl and Weightman also argue for the importance of *dhvani*, another Sanskrit literary concept (ibid., xxxviii).

[27] Pollock 1998; 2006: chaps. 8–10. De-Persianization in the Avadhi tradition is discussed further in Busch 2010b: 115–18.

[28] The fourth case study outlined below shows that Vishnudas did not figure in the literary self-understanding of the Braj community. Only the final portion of Vishnudas's version of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Svargārohaṇa*, had much currency in early modern manuscripts. Garcin de Tassy (1852) first drew attention to Vishnudas in the mid–nineteenth century after the poet had apparently languished in obscurity for centuries (I am grateful to Imre Bangha for the reference). In recent decades his oeuvre came to attract far more notice than it had garnered in the premodern period. See Dvivedi 1973; and McGregor 1999, 2000, 2003: 917–19.

[29] Man Singh Kachhwaha, Akbar's close ally, sponsored the building of the magnificent Govindadeva temple in Vrindavan in 1590 (Case 1996). Bir Singh Deo Bundela of Orchha, a patron of Keshavdas who had the ear of Jahangir (r. 1605–27), built a temple considered "the wonder of Mathura for the next half century." See Entwistle, who here references the observations of Tavernier (1987: 176–77). Also see Asher 1995: 161–64.

[30] On the larger political stakes of the Orchha court's new types of self-fashioning in this period, see Kolff 2002: 121–34. The exemplary bhakti of King Madhukar Shah (r. 1554–92) is much admired in Vaishnava hagiographies, including *Do sau bāvan vaiṣṇavan kī vārtā* (Tales of 252 Vaishnavas, 348–49) and *Śrībhaktamāl* (Auspicious Garland of Devotees, p. 731). The poet Hariram Vyas, one of the founding members of the Vaishnava community in Vrindavan and a contemporary of Hit Harivamsh and Swami Haridas, can also be connected to Madhukar Shah. These links are discussed from different angles in Pauwels 2002.

[31] Keshavdas's ancestors were from the Tomar court at Gwalior, and although the poet never mentions Vishnudas or otherwise signals a debt to him, it is possible that some latent sense of the potential for high vernacular writing had traveled with the family when it migrated from Gwalior to Orchha in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, helping to create the conditions for Keshavdas's new ventures in Brajbhasha *kāvya*.

[32] The likelihood that Sur was an oral poet (but a highly sophisticated one, exhibiting great literary finesse) is discussed by Hawley (1984: 42–44). Still, even oral compositions were quickly committed to writing in this period. Many Hindi bhakti songs do have a written heritage, complicating the categorical distinction (emphasized by Pollock, see note 17) between songs and *kāvya* in earlier Sanskrit tradition.

[33] Sanskritized vocabulary is a common feature of incipient vernacular *kāvya* (Pollock 2006: 322–38). For an example of heavily Sanskritized Braj style, see Busch 2005: 48.

[34] Busch 2005: 48–51.

[35] The eighteenth-century Braj poet Raja Savant Singh of Kishangarh, writing under

the pen name Nagridas, is one exception. He did experiment with Persianized (quasi-Urdu) styles in a Rekhta work known as *Ishk caman* (Garden of Love). See Pauwels 2006.

[36] *Kesava mani matirāma kabi, sukhadevādi aneka/inhaī ādi kabi aura je rasa mai sahita viveka /tinake lakṣana lakṣya lai āpani ukuti milāi/barno nava rasa nāyikā nāyaka mati sarasāi. Satkavigirāvilās* (v. 46).

[37] Sudan, it should be pointed out, uses alphabetical order, but when five lines are devoted to poets whose names begin with the first Devanagari consonant, *ka*, opening with Keshavdas in particular must be seen as a choice, a seeming indicator of his *ādikavi* status. *Sujāncaritra*, 4–9.

[38] *Kāvyanirṇay,* 1.16–17. With the expression "varied language" (*bhāṣā bibidha prakāra*) Bhikharidas may intend to point out that Tulsidas used both Avadhi and Braj. Gang, of whom only scattered Braj verses survive, wrote in Braj and Khari Boli. Some macaronic poetry mixing Hindi and Persian has also been attributed to him. See Krishna, 1960: 17–18)

[39] The three poets in line 2 are brothers. Note how the three Muslim names in line 5 are linked. Sundar, who follows directly, was a Mughal poet under Shah Jahan (in other manuscripts the Muslim poets Raslin and Mubarak substitute for or augment Sundar). I am grateful to Jack Hawley for drawing my attention to these manuscript variants and for helping me try to make sense of the vision of the Hindi canon that underlies this passage.

[40] (*Ekai lahaiṃ tapapuñjani ke phala jyoṃ tulasī aru sūra gosāīṃ/*
Ekai lahaiṃ bahusampati kesava bhūṣaṇa jyoṃ barabīra baṛaī/
Ekani koṃ jasa hī soṃ prayojana hai rasakhāni rahīma kī naīṃ/
dāsa kabittani kī caracā budhivantani koṃ sukhadai saba ṭhaīṃ) (*Kāvyanirṇay,* 1.10)

[41] Adapting Sanskrit literary theory to the Braj context was a typical pursuit of *rīti* writers. In this case Bhikharidas specifically mentions Mammata's *Kāvyaprakāśa* as a source in Kāvyanirnay, 1.5.

[42] *Kāvyaṃ yaśase'rthakṛte vyavahāravide śivetarakṣataye/ sadyaḥparanirvṛtaye kāntāsammitatayopadeśayuje* (*Kāvyaprakāśa,* 1.2). (I am grateful to the editors of this volume for bringing the Mammata reference to my notice.) It is instructive to contrast Mammata's remarks with the perception of the modern Hindi critic Hazari Prasad Dvivedi that the premodern Hindi tradition was fundamentally religious.

[43] Chand Bardai, legendary author of the *Pṛthvīrāj rāso,* mentioned only by Sudan, has been considered earlier, and Rajasthani, by some scholars. Although once thought to be a contemporary account of the twelfth-century Delhi ruler Prithvi Raj Chauhan, the text in its current form is a product of the Mughal period, and it has many Braj features. Rahim, like Tulsi, wrote in Braj and Avadhi.

[44] Dadupanthi cultural memory has been studied by Callewaert (1993, 2000). Only

an occasional courtly writer, such as the Mughal poet Gang, makes it into the Dadupanthi repertoire.

[45] I have not treated Jain *kāvya* in Hindi for reasons of space but also owing to the comparatively limited circulation of the corpus. On this tradition as a claimant to Hindi beginnings, see Gupta 1976.

[46] McGregor (1984: 1–28) and Shackle (1993: 281–82) have already drawn attention to the compelling connection between Muslims and vernacular literary beginnings in North India. Pollock also intuited a similar point: "it was precisely those in the north who did not swim in the Indic sea—that is, Muslim literati … who seem to have been the first to literize and literarize the languages of the Midlands" (2006: 392–93).

[47] The importance of Mughal patronage for the development of Brajbhasha as a court language is the subject of Busch 2010a.

[48] The case of premodern Sant poets would be another instance, even if their work was not allowed entry into the official domain of *kāvya* until relatively recently.

[49] Pollock 2006: 67–68.

[50] Pollock 1998; 2006: 330–79.

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PART FOUR

Śāstra: Sanskrit Systems of Knowledge in (and outside) History

10

Standards and Practices: Following, Making, and Breaking the Rules of *Śāstra*

Lawrence McCrea

In a series of essays in the 1980s and 1990s, Sheldon Pollock pioneered a new approach to understanding the phenomenon of *śāstra*—the vast body of textually encoded grammars of social, aesthetic, and moral rules that arose in the Sanskrit logosphere—and the prototypical relation of these texts to the practices they were meant to govern.[1] This represented not merely the first serious attempt to understand one of the predominant domains of Sanskrit textuality but, in a very real sense, an altogether new way of approaching the intellectual history of South Asia. It sought to account for certain long-mooted phenomena—such as the purported absence of "history" in South Asian culture—not as "natural" features of "the Indian mind" but as the product of intelligible intellectual and ideological choices on the part of social agents. Central to Pollock's account of the dynamics of systematized knowledge in premodern South Asia is the idea that *śāstra* came to be seen as absolutely transcendent and transhistorical in nature.

This notion, first formulated by the scriptural-hermeneutic tradition of Mīmāṃsā, was initially applied only to the Vedas, which were held to be authoritative precisely because they were both authorless and literally beginningless, but over time, by a process Pollock has explored in detail, it spread more widely into virtually all realms of systematic knowledge, such that *śāstras* in all areas came to be seen as authoritative precisely insofar as they could participate in the transhistoric character of the Vedas. This led, not simply to a passive absence, but to an active *denial* of history. To quote:

> When the dominant hermeneutic of the Vedas eliminated the possibility of historical referentiality, any text seeking recognition of its truth claims—any text seeking to participate in brahmanical discourse at all—was required to exclude precisely this referential sphere. Discursive texts that came to be composed under the sign of the Veda eliminated historical referentiality and

with it all possibility of historiography. (Pollock 1989a: 610)

And, concomitant with this denial of history—the absence of a meaningful past—there is likewise a strong tendency to occlude the possibility of meaningful development of any of the existing śāstric disciplines in the future. To quote again:

> From the conception of an *a priori śāstra* it logically follows—and Indian intellectual history demonstrates that this conclusion was clearly drawn—that there can be no conception of progress, of the forward "movement from worse to better," on the basis of innovations in practice. . . . If any sort of amelioration is to occur, this can only be in the form of a "regress," a backward movement aiming at a closer and more faithful approximation to the divine pattern. . . . Logically excluded from epistemological meaningfulness are likewise experience, experiment, invention, discovery, innovation. (Pollock 1985: 515)

Without challenging the overall cultural sway of this model of knowledge, I would like in this essay to briefly examine one area in which there appears to be at least some measure of resistance to the dynamic of śāstric transcendence—that of literary theory (Alaṃkāraśāstra)—and to consider the implications of this for our understanding of the domains of theory and practice and their relation.[2]

Before engaging with the specifics of the Alaṃkāraśāstra case, it is worth pausing to note that there is a certain degree of theoretical unsteadiness in expansion of śāstric transcendence out of the realm of Vedic ritual and *dharma*, where it has its origin, and into that of the "ordinary," the *laukika*. The seminal and most widely regarded justification of the authority of eternal texts is of course that provided by the Mīmāṃsakas in their defense of Vedic infallibility. For them, the Vedas, the *smṛtis*, and all other texts that derive their authority therefrom, deal, and deal only, with transcendent matters—that is to say, with matters totally beyond the scope of perception or other ordinary human means of knowledge. Given the Mīmāṃsakas' principle of "intrinsic validity"—that all awareness must be accepted as valid unless and until grounds for its falsification appear—this makes the claims of the Veda unfalsifiable *in principle*: it tells us of things no other means of knowledge can access, and hence no other means of knowledge can even potentially conflict with it. But the expansion of *śāstra* into the ordinary—sex, political theory, architecture, horse care, falconry, and the like—while it may greatly increase the scope of its regulatory cultural authority, also renders it more vulnerable, by making it testable and, at least potentially, falsifiable. This is precisely why, as Pollock

himself frequently notes, the Mīmāṃsakas, and certain highly Mīmāṃsā-influenced philosophers such as the logician Jayantabhaṭṭa, allow a far more restricted scope for *śāstra* than the popular understanding of its domain seems to reflect.[3] By extending the claims of śāstric infallibility into areas where it can at least potentially clash with actual observation, they weaken the case for its exclusive authority. It is true that the potential for empirical falsification of "*laukika*" *śāstra*s is seldom directly addressed and, when it is raised, is often dismissed rather offhandedly.[4] Nevertheless, it creates at least the conditions for the possibility of resistance, tacit or overt, to the absolute predominance of the śāstric paradigm. And I think it can be shown, at least in the realm of poetic theory, that this possibility was actualized, often in small ways and without great fanfare, but unmistakably nonetheless.

Among the vast and bewildering variety of *śāstra*s produced in Sanskrit, that dealing with poetry is unusual in several key respects. Perhaps its most noteworthy feature in light of the present discussion, is that, unlike any other, the practice this *śāstra* deals with—poetry—is acknowledged to have originated at a particular point in time: the composition of the "first poem," the *Rāmāyaṇa*, by the "first poet," Vālmīki.[5] And this beginning seems, in comparison with the "beginnings" ascribed to many cultural phenomena in premodern India, peculiarly definite. There is nothing in the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s seminal description of the birth of poetry or, so far as I can determine, in any later accounts, to indicate that this is a "rebirth" or a cyclical recurrence. If *kāvya* existed in other *kalpa*s or cosmic ages, as is claimed for some other discourses, we certainly hear nothing of it. Even on the most widely shared understanding of poetry, then, there is at least one noteworthy event in its history: its coming into being. This origin widely is not simply seen as the horizon of our knowledge—as far back as anyone can remember. Vālmīki's act of creation becomes a touchstone for hosts of later poets, who regularly situate themselves in genealogies of poetic greats invariably stretching back to Vālmīki—and no farther.[6]

A second atypical feature of poetic discourse—and it is not immediately clear if this is related to the putative historicality of its subject matter—is the general lack of consensus, even on key topics, that characterizes the field from its earliest period. As has been noted by Yigal Bronner, among others, Alaṃkāraśāstra never had a single agreed on "root text," a work of recognized authority comparable to, for example, the *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, the *Kāmasūtra*, or Pāṇini's grammar in their respective disciplines.[7] There is considerable divergence, from very early on, even about the most basic questions. It is true that some authors seem to attempt to endow their works with

this sort of authority. Pollock, tracing out evidence for the ideology of śāstric transcendence in the field of poetics, points to two examples in particular: Vāmana's *Kāvyālaṃkārasūtra* and Rājaśekhara's *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, both of which plainly do model themselves on fully canonized and commandingly authoritative works from other fields—the grammatical and philosophical *sūtra* literature in Vāmana's case and more sprawlingly discursive *śāstra*s, such as the *Arthaśāstra* or the dramaturgical *Nāṭyaśāstra*, in the case of Rājaśekhara—apparently in the hope that similar authority will attach to their own works. But surely the most noteworthy aspect of these efforts is how rapidly and totally they are frustrated, both works becoming decidedly passé almost before the ink on them is dry.[8] Alaṃkāra works, whatever their aspirations, date quickly, and there is an up-for-grabs quality about the field decidedly at odds with the tendency of even "*laukika*" *śāstra*s like those devoted to sex or politics to elevate one or more early works to a state of presumptive infallibility. Even when the *Kāmasūtra* or the *Arthaśāstra* are more or less left behind in favor of more recent works in their respective fields, they retain an aura of authority. Yet this is not at all the case in Alaṃkāraśāstra. There a few rare cases of poetic theorists who try to elevate one or more earlier authors to the status of infallible authorities, but such efforts never seem to catch on.[9] Attempts to "canonize" works of Alaṃkāraśāstra are seldom made and invariably fail.

Even this long-running instability does not in and of itself represent any sort of direct challenge to the dominant paradigm of śāstric transcendence. The revelation or recovery of the true and eternal knowledge of poetry could always lie just around the corner. It might even be already at hand, lying unsuspected among a host of impostors or degenerate imitations. Yet one might reasonably suppose that the persistent failure, over many centuries, to arrive at a stable consensus on any body of doctrine or canon of texts in the field of Alaṃkāraśāstra would tend to give rise to the suspicion that there is no such consensus to be found—that flux, rather than being an aberration, is in fact the natural state of poetic theory. And I think it can be shown, in fact, that over time it came to be more or less generally acknowledged that poetic theory, for better or worse, was a body of knowledge liable to change over time, and a field in which meaningful innovation was not only possible but commonplace.

To begin with, I would like to examine the attitude on this question reflected in the work of the great ninth-century Kashmiri poetic theorist Ānandavardhana. Ānandavardhana is something of a rarity in the world of Sanskrit *śāstra* by any standard—a self-conscious, and indeed rather brazenly self-promotional, innovator. As such, it should perhaps come as no surprise that

he reflects more overtly than most on the possibility and actuality of historical change in both the theory and the practice of poetry. What is most interesting, though, is that Ānandavardhana's own discussion suggests a general attitude that sees theoretical innovation in poetic theory not as something exceptional to his own work but, in fact, as commonplace. In defending his claims for suggestion (*dhvani*) as a vitally important but newly discovered mode of poetic signification,[10] Ānandavardhana considers a several possible objections, one of which runs as follows.

> Even if, given the infinite variety of modes of expression, there is some minor type that has not been described by the well-known definers of poetry, we see no reason for people to dance about, saying '*Dhvani, dhvani,*' closing their eyes in the false belief that they are connoisseurs. Varieties of *alaṃkāra* by the thousands *have been shown, and continue to be shown,* by great people, and we do not hear of them behaving in this way [emphasis mine].[11]

Note that what is at issue here between Ānandavardhana and his opponent is not whether theoretical innovation occurs or not—it is a premise of the discussion that it does—but whether or not the particular discovery Ānandavardhana claims to have made is as important as he makes it out to be. The opponent's position is that the discovery of "*dhvani*" cannot be regarded as anything special precisely because innovation is so commonplace in Alaṃkāraśāstra—people are discovering new poetic figures all the time, "by the thousands." And the way Ānandavardhana frames his discussion suggests that this is not a controversial attitude at all.

Of course, these newly discovered figures are said to be "revealed" (*prakāśita*), rather than invented. That is to say, we are speaking of innovations in theory, not necessarily in practice. And indeed Ānandavardhana, in developing his main thesis, indicates that the "poetic suggestion" (*dhvani*) he is bringing to light and labeling in his work has in fact existed from the very origin of poetry—from the first verse uttered by the "First Poet," Vālmīki. This limits the scope of innovation Ānandavardhana is apparently willing to recognize; theorists may continually be identifying and defining more and more poetic elements, but his discussion strongly suggests that the actual practice of poetry, at least in its essentials, has not significantly changed since its origin.[12] But this points up yet another deviation from the standard model of śāstric transcendence. At the heart of Ānandavardhana's argument is the claim that poetic theory can and does learn from practice, in fact, that the most essential component, the very "soul of poetry" (*kāvyātman*), though it has been embodied in poetic practice from the very beginning, is only now, in his

own work, being brought to theoretical consciousness, named, and analyzed.

One should note that this stance of Ānandavardhana's does not in any way represent a generalized attack on the transcendence of *śāstra* or the preeminence of theory over practice. Rather it is of a piece with his broader attempt to promote a kind of poetic exceptionalism. In dealing with philosophically motivated criticism of the *dhvani* theory, he pursues a kind of live-and-let-live strategy, and in doing so he seeks to draw a firm line between the transcendent truths that concern philosophers and the thoroughly ordinary (*laukika*) truths of the poetic realm—truths that he sees as being very firmly grounded in experience.

> The disputes of philosophers (*tārkikāṇām*) may well proceed regarding the *expressiveness* of words—such as whether it is natural to them or based on convention. But what occasion is there for dispute about *suggestiveness*, which is epiphenomenal to that [expressiveness], which is common to other things [such as the notes of a wordless song], and which is understood as something well known in the world [*lokaprasiddha*]? All the disputes of philosophers are concerned with what is extraordinary, not with what is ordinary (*laukika*). For they are not seen to disagree with one another about some entity that is perceptible to the whole world and is uncontradicted [by any other perception], such as blueness, sweetness, etc. For, someone who calls a blue thing "blue," when there is no conflicting perception, is not contradicted by another saying, "This isn't blue, this is yellow!" In just the same way, the suggestiveness of all these—of words, which convey an expressed meaning, of the sounds of a song, which convey no expressed meaning, and of gestures and so on, which do not consist of sounds at all—is established by experience; who could reject this? Expressions and actions of various sorts that convey some beautiful, nonverbal meaning, either in combination or separately, are seen in the assemblies of cultured people. What rational person, wishing to avoid ridicule for himself, would deny these things?[13]

The maneuver is both concessive and assertive: in their own proper sphere, the trans-empirical realm, it concedes the unrivalled predominance of theory (though it seems to presuppose than conflict rather than consensus is the norm in attempts to ferret out transcendent truths). But it seeks to carve out a domain for the ordinary, the *laukika*, and within this domain it not only makes room for the empirical but positively asserts the preeminence of experience over any sort of theoretical claims or arguments.

And this privileging of the empirical is not merely made in the abstract. Ānandavardhana, most strikingly, actually indicates that authors should

violate the prescriptions of *śāstra* when they conflict with the aesthetic goals of their works. This can be seen most clearly in Ānandavardhana's discussion of the principles of plot construction, a topic already dealt with extensively in the dramaturgical *Nāṭyaśāstra* ascribed to Bharata. Bharata's elaborate prescriptions require the plot of any full-fledged drama to contain five specific junctures (*sandhi*s) and a total of sixty-four juncture components (*sandhi-aṅga*s), but Ānandavardhana cautions that this list of stipulated plot components is not to be reproduced unthinkingly. In constructing their plots, he advises authors to "arrange the plot junctures and their components with a view toward the manifestation of *rasa*, and not merely out of a desire to fulfill the rules of *śāstra*."[14] And to demonstrate what he has in mind here, he provides both positive and negative examples. The arrangement of plot elements should be made

> with a view toward the manifestation of *rasa*, as in the *Ratnāvali*, and not merely out of a desire to fulfill the rules of *śāstra*, as in the *Veṇīsaṃhāra*, where the component of the "unfolding" plot juncture called "romantic play" is introduced merely out of a desire to conform to the view of Bharata, even though it is not suitable to the development of the contextually appropriate *rasa*.[15]

Though stated rather briefly, this passage has serious implications for Ānandavardhana's understanding of the theory/practice dynamic. The most noteworthy, in the present context, is that his argument presupposes that it is possible to know what sort of plot construction will effectively foster the development of *rasa* without the aid of *śāstra*, even when *śāstra* explicitly prescribes a contrary construction. It represents, in effect, a call to *śāstra*-independent judgment. It is important to be clear about what Ānandavardhana sees as problematic in Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa's play. He is not accusing Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa of misinterpreting Bharata's rule,[16] nor is he objecting to the inclusion of this rule in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. He is not criticizing Bharata for making the rule but rather criticizing Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa for *obeying* it. And this stance renders the status and function of *śāstra* far more ambiguous than on the classic transcendence-model. *Śāstra* remains a source of knowledge and an important one, but not (even indirectly) the sole source of knowledge about the proper way to compose poetry or write plays. A (seemingly independent) role is assigned to actual observation of what is or is not effective in achieving the aesthetic goal of a literary work, and, when the two are seen to conflict, it is experienced effectiveness, rather than the śāstrically encoded rule, that is presented as the deciding factor.

And, to complete the pattern, the other crucial ideological feature of the transcendent *śāstra* model—the denial of the possibility of historical progress—is likewise seen to erode somewhat in Ānandavardhana's work. It is true that Ānandavardhana does not actually claim to have discovered any meaningful development over time in poetic practice (analogous to the development he argues for in the domain of theory). But he evidently does envision such progress as a possibility. Indeed, he openly advocates it and seems to regard it as imminent. This can be seen most clearly in his treatment of *citra-kāvya* ("flashy poetry" or "picture poetry"). This is Ānandavardhana's term for poetry in which there is no intent at all to evoke any *rasa*—any sympathetic emotional response—in one's audience. As Ānandavardhana holds up the evocation of *rasa* as the highest ideal in poetic composition, the very existence of such poetry poses something of a theoretical problem, and he adopts a denigrating attitude toward it. Why, then, does he make room for it at all in his scheme of poetry? In response to this question, he offers the following remarks.

> We have come up with this *citra* because we see that poets whose speech is unrestrained have composed poetry without regard for any ultimate purport such as *rasa*. But, now that a proper establishment of poetic principles is being made, there is, for people nowadays (*idānīṃtanānām*), no sort of poetry other than the suggestive, since, when poets of mature capacity lack any intent to convey *rasa*, etc., their work is not pleasing.[17]

Poets, being "unrestrained," have composed *citra* poetry in the past, and hence it must be included in his typology, but Ānandavardhana here effectively declares that the age of *citra* is now over, a phenomenon in which he sees his own work as the principle cause. "Now that a proper establishment of poetic principles *is being made* (*kriyamāṇe*)"—the use of the present participle is quite pointed. Ānandavardhana proposes, and seems actually to expect, that his own theoretical work will occasion a major transformation in poetic practice: a whole branch of poetry will drop out of existence now that he has shown it to be aesthetically valueless. That his expectation proves to be quite wrong is decidedly beside the point. He sees historical transformation in the world of poetic practice as both possible and desirable. So we can see that all the classic components of the transcendent picture of *śāstra*—the denial of historical origins of theory or practice, the insistence that theory must always precede practice and cannot be shaped or informed by it, and the denial of the possibility of meaningful progress in theory or practice—all break down or are at least selectively negated in Ānandavardhana's poetics.

As Ānandavardhana is that rarity in Sanskrit intellectual history—a self-conscious and admitted innovator—one might imagine that he is something of an outlier in this respect, but similar attitudes can be seen in the works of far less overtly revolutionary figures in the field of Alaṃkāraśāstra. The twelfth-century figurative theorist Ruyyaka, to take only one example, seems quite interested both in the development of poetic theory over time and in the possibility of theory learning from practice. He actually begins his most important work—the *Alaṃkārasarvasva*, a highly influential manual of poetic figures—with a short history of the field of poetic theory, beginning with the views of the "early" (*prācya*) Ālaṃkārikas and moving on to Ānandavardhana and beyond. And a similar consciousness of the historical change of poetic theory over time can be seen elsewhere in Ruyyaka's work. For example, there is a passage in Mahimabhaṭṭa's *Vyaktiviveka* (on which Ruyyaka commented) in which the author praises a verse of Kālidāsa's *Raghuvaṃśa* for comparing the sage Vasiṣṭha's cow returning home at night to the light of the setting sun, not by an explicit simile (*upamā*) but by the figure "illuminator" (*dīpaka*), which reveals an implied simile through syntactic parallelism.[18] Ruyyaka, commenting on this passage, remarks as follows:

> Because here [in this verse] both the cow and the sunlight are contextually relevant, modern day people (*adyatana*s) consider this [figure] to be "equivalent connection" (*tulyayogitā*). But the ancients (*ciraṃtana*s) took it to be a *dīpaka*—since, even though both are contextually relevant, the cow has greater relevance in the larger context—and it is with this in mind that [Mahimabhaṭṭa] makes this line of argument.[19]

What Ruyyaka is doing here is in a sense quite ordinary, if very uncommon in the world of śāstric Sanskrit. He is identifying an anachronism. In the old days, people called this figure a *dīpaka*; nowadays, we call it *tulyayogitā*. Mahimabhaṭṭa (not an "ancient" in Ruyyaka's eyes) has used the archaic term for the figure, and this calls for an explanation. Note that there is nothing in Ruyyaka's remarks to suggest that either the new or the old terminology is necessarily "correct." Both old and new theorists have cogent reasons for labeling the figure as they do. But things change. Poetic theory, and the language of poetic theory, develop over time, and terms used now do not always mean what they once did. Ruyyaka plainly recognizes the actuality, if not necessarily the desirability, of historical development in his field.[20]

Ruyyaka's own manual of poetic figures is traditional in a certain sense but quite innovative as well. In it, he is mainly concerned to rationalize, justify, and clarify the logical structure of existing figurative categories, but

he does introduce several altogether new figures as well, and his methods and stated reasons in doing so reveal a great deal about his understanding of the theory/practice dynamic. In one particularly noteworthy instance, under the heading of similarity-based figures, Ruyyaka introduces a new figure, which he calls *ullekha* (depiction), in which one thing is apprehended in several different ways, either by different people or under different conditions, "as, for example," he says, "in the *Harṣacarita*, in the description of the country Śrīkaṇṭha, '. . . which [was seen] by sages as a penance grove, by harlots as a place of lovemaking, and by dancers as a music hall.'"[21] Apart from the fact that he is describing a heretofore unnoticed figure, Ruyyaka's treatment is unusual in several respects. While all his examples are cited from existing poetry, Ruyyaka almost never names his sources; here he not only names the text but identifies the section of the work from which the example is drawn. It seems, from his discussion, that this passage for him is not merely an example but *evidence* for something he needs to prove. His discussion anticipates various conservative objections to the introduction of this previously unrecognized figure—that it is ultimately reducible to figures such as metaphor (*rūpaka*), false identification (*bhrāntimat*), or paronomasia (*śleṣa*) (47–48). Ruyyaka responds in each case that there is an aesthetically significant element in the passage from the *Harṣacarita* that is not captured by any of these known figures, either singly or in combination—the grasping of a single object in multiple aspects. And this irreducibility of the example is the heart of his argument: he is claiming, in effect, to have discovered a new figure, existing in practice but so far unknown to theory. Here again, then, we see a deviation from the general principle that theory cannot be informed by practice.[22]

One could point to further examples, but I think the general point is clear. In the field of Alaṃkāraśāstra we find signs of attitudes toward poetic theory (fairly widespread, I would argue) that deviate from the classic model of the transcendent *śāstra* in all of its key features: the denial of historical origins, the principle that theory always precedes practice and cannot be informed by it, and the denial of meaningful development over time and of the possibility of progress. I do not want to suggest that this phenomenon, seemingly confined to the world of poetic theory, should be seen as undermining Pollock's case for the pervasive and very real dominance of the transcendent *śāstra* model in Sanskrit intellectual history. Indeed, it might well be said to affirm it in its essentials. That divergence from this model in one area should be accompanied by divergence in the others makes clear that the general association between these features is not mere happenstance. If the only major *śāstra* generally acknowledged to have a historical origin is also the only one that seems to

readily admit the possibility of historical change, and of the ability of theory to learn from practice, this would seem to confirm that it is precisely because most *śāstra*s are beginningless that they are also seen as immune to historical change and practice-driven adaptation.

Notes

[1] See, principally, Pollock 1985, 1989a, 1989b, 1989c, 1990, 1993, and 1997.

[2] See the essay by Arnold in this volume for another critical exploration of Pollock's śāstric transcendence model.

[3] See, for example, Pollock 1989c: 309; 1985: 502, 516; and 1989a: 609. See the essay by Cox in this volume for further discussion of Jayantabhaṭṭa and his understanding of what counts as *śāstra*.

[4] See, for example, Yaśodhara's opening remarks in his commentary on Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra*, quoted in Pollock 1985: 506–7.

[5] See *Rāmāyaṇa*, 1.2.1ff.; and Pollock 2006: 77ff.

[6] See Pollock 1995.

[7] See Bronner 2002: 450; and Bronner and Tubb 2008b: 620–21.

[8] The *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* was never commented on and seems to have been virtually forgotten by the later Alaṃkāra tradition. Vāmana's earliest commentator Sahadeva (ca. 900 CE) indicates that his work had already fallen into complete obscurity (*bhraṣṭāmnāya*) only a few decades after its composition, from which it was apparently revived by Sahadeva's teacher Mukulabhaṭṭa. It remained fairly well known thereafter, and is quoted from time to time, but seldom with anything approaching reverence. See McCrea 2008: 265–66.

[9] The sixteenth-century South Indian theorist Appayya Dīkṣita, for example, seems to regard Daṇḍin as an infallible authority. See Bronner 2002: 450; and Bronner and Tubb 2008b: 628–29.

[10] But it was not newly invented; Ānandavardhana's claim is that *dhvani* has been present in poetry from the beginning but has heretofore gone unnoticed by Ālaṃkārikas.

[11] *kiṃ ca vāgvikalpānām ānantyāt sambhavaty api vā kasmiṃścit kāvyalakṣaṇavidhāyibhiḥ prasiddhair apradarśite prakāraleśe dhvanir dhvanir iti yad etad alīkasahṛdayatvabhāvanāmukulitalocanair nṛtyate, tatra hetuṃ na vidmaḥ. sahasraśo hi mahātmabhir anyair alaṅkāraprakārāḥ prakāśitāḥ prakāśyante ca. na ca teṣām eṣā daśā śrūyate.* (*Dhvanyāloka*, 25–26)

[12] He does envision (and recommend) such change as a future possibility (see below).

[13] *vācakatve hi tārkikāṇāṃ vipratipattayaḥ pravartantām, kim idaṃ svābhāvikaṃ śabdānām āho svit sāmayikam ityādyāḥ. vyañjakatve tu tatpṛṣṭhabhāvini bhāvāntarasādhāraṇe lokaprasiddha evānugamyamāne ko vimatīnām avasaraḥ. alaukike hy arthe tārkikāṇāṃ vimatayo nikhilāḥ pravartante, na tu laukike. na hi nīlamadhurādiṣv aśeṣalokendriyagocare bādhārahite tattve parasparaṃ vipratipannā dṛśyante. na hi bādhārahitaṃ nīlaṃ nīlam iti bruvann apareṇa pratiṣidhyate naitan nīlaṃ pītam etad iti. tathaiva vyañjakatvaṃ vācakānāṃ śabdānām avācakānāṃ ca*

gītadhvanīnām aśabdarūpāṇāṃ ca ceṣṭādīnāṃ yat sarveṣām anubhavasiddham eva tat kenāpahnūyate. aśabdam arthaṃ ramaṇīyaṃ hi sūcayanto vyāhārās tathā vyāpārā nibaddhāś cānibaddhāś ca vidagdhapariṣatsu vividhā vibhāvyante. tān upahāsyatām ātmanaḥ pariharan ko 'tisandadhīta sacetāḥ. (*Dhvanyāloka*, 445–47)

[14] *sandhisandhyaṅgaghaṭanaṃ rasābhivyaktyapekṣayā |*
na tu kevalayā śāstrasthitisampādanecchayā || (*Dhvanyāloka*, 3.12 [p. 329])

[15] *rasābhivyaktyapekṣayā yathā ratnāvalyām, na tu kevalaṃ śāstrasthitisampādanecchayā yathā veṇīsaṃhāre vilāsākhyasya pratimukhasandhyaṅgasya prakṛtarasanibandhānanuguṇam api dvitīye 'ṅke bharatamatānusaraṇamātrecchayā ghaṭanam.* (*Dhvanyāloka*, 336–40)

[16] This is so despite the claims of Ānandavardhana's commentator Abhinavagupta to the contrary. See *Locana* ad *Dhvanyāloka*, 340–41.

[17] *etac ca citraṃ kavīnāṃ viśṛṅkhalagirāṃ rasāditātparyam anapekṣyaiva kāvyapravṛttidarśanād asmābhiḥ parikalpitam. idānīṃtanānāṃ tu nyāyye kāvyanayavyavasthāpane kriyamāṇe nāsty eva dhvanivyatiriktaḥ kāvyaprakāraḥ. yataḥ paripākavatāṃ kavīnāṃ rasāditātparyavirahe vyāpāra eva na śobhate.* (*Dhvanyāloka*, 497)

[18] "At the end of the day, having made the other directions pure by moving through them, there began to go to its rest, red as the red of new-grown shoots, the light of the sun, and the sage's cow."

> *saṃcārapūtāni digantarāṇi kṛtvā dinānte nilayāya gantum |*
> *pracakrame pallavarāgatāmrā prabhā pataṅgasya muneś ca dhenuḥ ||*
> (*Raghuvaṃśa*, 2.15, quoted in *Vyaktiviveka*, 354)

[19] *atra ca dvayoḥ prabhādhenvoḥ prākaraṇikatvāt tulyayogitām adyatanā manyante. dvayor api prākaraṇikatve mahāprakaraṇāpekṣayā dhenoḥ prakṛṣṭaṃ prākaraṇikatvaṃ prabhāyās tv aprakṛṣṭam ity etadapekṣayā ciraṃtanair dīpakam etat sthāpitam. tadapekṣayātrānena tadvacoyuktiḥ kṛtā.* (Ruyyaka, commenting on *Vyaktiviveka*, 355)

[20] This was something increasingly recognized by later authors in the field as well.– See, especially, Bronner and Tubb 2008b.

[21] *yathā "yas tapovanam iti munibhiḥ kāmāyatanam iti veśyābhiḥ saṃgītaśāleti lāsakaiḥ" ityādi harṣacarite śrīkaṇṭhākhyajanapadavarṇane.* (*Alaṃkārasarvasva*, 47, quoting *Harṣacarita*, 43ff.)

[22] For a similar instance of such a discovered figure, see Śobhākaramitra's (thirteenth century) *Alaṃkāraratnākara*, 12–14; Jagannātha's (seventeenth century) *Rasagaṅgādhara*, vol. 2, 146–153); and Jagannātha's *Citramīmāṃsākhaṇḍana*, 27–28. Śobhākaramitra and, following him, Jagannātha argue that the second line of *Kumārasaṃbhava*, 1.3cd (*eko hi doṣo guṇasaṃnipāte nimajjatīndoḥ kiraṇeṣv ivāṅkaḥ*, "for a single flaw is swallowed up in a mass of good qualities, like the dark spot in

the rays of the moon," traditionally analyzed as a simile, cannot be one, because the standard of comparison (*upamāna*, i.e., the spot on the moon) is not something *similar* to the thing being compared with it (*upameya*, i.e., the fault swallowed up by good qualities), but is actually an example of a flaw swallowed up by good qualities. A true simile must be between one thing and another, distinct from but similar to it, and that is not the case here. They accordingly take this to be a new (i.e., previously untheorized) figure, "example" (*udāharaṇa*). Again, it is the unassimilable occurrence in practice that forms the basis for the innovation in theory.

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11

For Whom is the "Naturalness" of Language a Problem? Thoughts on Reframing a Buddhist-Mīmāṃsaka Debate

Dan Arnold

Among the most influential of Sheldon Pollock's contributions to the fields of Indology has been his theorization of the category of *śāstra*. In this regard, Pollock has long been concerned with the extent to which the authoritative status of *śāstra* was based in the prevalence of views developed in the tradition of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, which he has (not inappropriately) characterized as "the dominant orthodox discourse of traditional India" (Pollock 1989: 604). In particular, his view is that the ideal case of authority here involves the characteristically Mīmāṃsaka claim that the Vedic texts are transcendently "impersonal" (*apauruṣeya*), having no authors and no beginning in time. Mīmāṃsakas accordingly based claims to the authoritative status of "*all* traditional Brahmanical learning" on its being somehow comprised in Vedic texts that are so understood (1989: 609).[1] Pollock thus ventures that "when the Vedas were emptied of their 'referential intention,' other sorts of Brahmanical intellectual practices seeking to legitimate their truth-claims had perforce to conform to this special model of what counts as knowledge, and so to suppress the evidence of their own historical existence" (609).

This account lends itself (perhaps not coincidentally) to the sort of analysis that is characteristic of Pierre Bourdieu, according to whom, "Every established order tends to produce (to very different degrees and with very different means) the naturalization of its own arbitrariness" (1977: 164). In those cases where the "objective structures" of some particular social formation manage most fully to "reproduce themselves in the agents' dispositions," it comes about, Bourdieu suggests, that "the established cosmological and political order is perceived not as arbitrary, i.e. as one possible order among others, but as a self-evident and natural order which goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned" (165–66). So, too, for Pollock: among the "ideological effects of the shastric paradigm" is that "the living, social,

historical, contingent tradition is *naturalized*, becoming as much a part of the order of things as the laws of nature themselves: Just as the social, historical phenomenon of language is viewed by Mīmāṃsā as *natural* and eternal, so the social dimension and historicality of all cultural practices are eliminated in the shastric paradigm" (Pollock 1985: 516, emphasis added). On this analysis, then, the influence of Pūrva Mīmāṃsa on South Asian conceptions of knowledge has been, perhaps above all, effectively to mask the specifically located and interested character of knowledge claims, which has the effect (as Roland Barthes has put the point) of "giving an historical intention a natural justification, and making contingency appear eternal."[2]

In the context of such an analysis, Pollock has recurrently valorized the Buddhist tradition as chief among the South Asian voices of dissent from the Brahmanical orthodoxy thus secured by Mīmāṃsā. Against, then, the kind of "naturalness" that Mīmāṃsakas aimed to claim for the views they defended, "Buddhism developed a wider-ranging understanding of contingency or conventionalism in human life"—an understanding such as "stood in radical opposition to the naturalism of the *vaidika* thought world" (Pollock 2006: 52). This characteristically Buddhist "conventionalism" is, above all, reflected in a view of language that "contrasts as profoundly as possible with Mīmāṃsā postulates of a primal, necessary, and nonarbitrary relationship" between language and non-linguistic fact (53)—a view that instead takes this relationship to be "based on pure convention" (52).[3] This contrast with Mīmāṃsā is again expressed in terms of Bourdieu's idea of naturalness: "[I]n the face of the new conventionalism of Buddhism orthodoxy responded with what may best be viewed as a desire to *renaturalize* the world."[4]

There is much to recommend this picture of the engagement between these rival traditions of Indian thought, and Pollock is surely right to see in the evident success of Mīmāṃsaka discourse a veritable case study in the analytic categories of Bourdieu—a case study, that is, in the power of injunctions that manage to represent themselves simply as expressions of the way things are. Buddhists, for their part, surely had specifically ideological reasons for contesting characteristically Mīmāṃsaka claims regarding, inter alia, the nature and status of language—reasons, that is, that challenge Brahmanical claims particularly insofar as those function to underwrite the privileged access of Brahmanical society to whatever is judged most important for human flourishing.

But I would urge that Buddhist philosophical arguments against Mīmāṃsakas are not, at the end of the day, chiefly motivated by such specifically ideological concerns. It is, I think, not an exaggeration to say

that all Buddhist philosophical discourse finally concerns the constitutively Buddhist doctrine of *selflessnes*—and many implications having to do with this, in particular, are reasonably taken (as they were by many Buddhists) in such a way that Pūrva Mīmāṃsā represents an especially significant challenge to Buddhist thought. Thus, Buddhists who argued for the conventional and contingent character of linguistic items—or more precisely (as the Buddhist Dharmakīrti developed this point), that everything about linguistic awareness must finally be explicable with reference only to the kinds of causally efficacious particulars that alone really exist—can be understood to have recognized that the kinds of abstractions that figure in the analysis of language do fundamentally the same kind of work as the abstraction which is a "self." Abstractions such as linguistic universals therefore could not be allowed into a final ontology for the same kinds of reasons that reference to *selves* does not belong in an ultimately true description of reality.[5]

Now, it might not be thought that thus emphasizing the kinds of reasons that are, as it were, "internal" to Buddhist and Mīmāṃsaka philosophical discourses would recommend a judgment about Mīmāṃsā that is any more favorable than that yielded by an ideology critique; for surely there are few who would now wish to deny the characteristically Buddhist claim that language evolves as a function of contingent human capacities and interests, or who would wish to affirm the contrasting Mīmāṃsaka claim that language has no history. I would like, however, to honor Pollock's contributions to the field by suggesting that there may, after all, be more to be said for the characteristically Mīmāṃsaka intuitions here in play than is often supposed. What I want to suggest, in particular, is that there is a significant extent to which Buddhists and Mīmāṃsakas who argued about the status of language can be understood to have argued, as well, about a point still very much at issue in twentieth-century philosophy of mind. The twentieth-century debate was thus framed by philosopher Roderick Chisholm, who said of Wilfrid Sellars's influential essay "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" (1956) that the main question over which they diverged was this: "Can we explicate the intentional character of believing and of other psychological attitudes by reference to certain features of language; or must we explicate the intentional characteristics of language by reference to believing and to other psychological attitudes?"[6]

Borrowing a term from Pollock's recurrent characterization of the Mīmāṃsaka project, I suggest that we can say that Indian Buddhists such as (paradigmatically) Dharmakīrti—who clearly held, against the Mīmāṃsakas, that (in Chisholm's terms) language should be explained by psychology, not the reverse—developed an account of thought that is in important ways

comparable to some contemporary projects that are often characterized as *naturalizing* mental content. To the extent that is right, and to the extent, as well, that some Mīmāṃsaka arguments regarding language are appropriately generalized as challenging precisely this aspect of the Buddhist project—as showing, that is, some of the problems that to this day bedevil attempts to "naturalize" mental content—it seems to me there is good reason to render more complex our understanding of what could be meant by the "naturalness" of language. Depending on how we take this idea, there may be good reason to regard some Mīmāṃsaka arguments more sympathetically than is typically done.

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Let me begin by briefly laying out some of the contemporary philosophical questions that I have in mind. Following an idea influentially developed in the late-nineteenth-century work of Austrian philosopher and psychologist Franz Brentano, twentieth-century philosophers of many different persuasions have taken the philosophy of mind centrally to involve the idea of *intentionality*.[7] As a term of art, *intentionality* chiefly picks out the fact that mental events are constitutively characterized by their having some *content*; as Brentano says in one of the canonical passages on the subject, "In presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on" (1973: 88).[8] Among the ideas here is that whatever we might reasonably say about the relation of (for example) a brick to its surrounding environment, we would not say that it is *about* anything; the relation that characterizes a thought's being *about* its content is, many have supposed, peculiarly distinctive of the mental.

There is a great deal to be said about the history and varying uses of this idea, but in one form or another, a main question in the philosophy of mind has thus been (as one contemporary philosopher has put it) "to understand how one thing (some mental item) *can mean or represent or be about* some other thing (for example, some state of affairs)—to understand how anything can have content" (Baker 1987: 9, emphasis added). For my purposes, it is most significant to note that for "some mental item" here we could substitute *some linguistic item*; for it seems right to say that linguistic items (sentences, stories, claims) can also "mean or represent or be about" states of affairs. There turns out, then, to be a close relationship between the intentionality of the mental and certain features of language; indeed, linguistic items may represent the one case of something other than mental events that itself exemplifies intentionality. Perhaps, then, it can tell us something significant about human mental life that language exhibits something like the same

feature—something, indeed, like the same way of relating to the world—that Brentano took uniquely to characterize the mental. There may be, in other words, a significant connection between Brentano's "reference to a content" and the way in which linguistic items refer to what they mean.[9]

While there are many ways one might tell the story of this relationship, it is surely the case that this fact explains why so much contemporary philosophy of mind looks a lot like philosophy of language, a fact humorously noted by Jerry Fodor, who once referred to his own project as one in "the philosophy of mind (or the philosophy of language, or whatever this stuff is)" (1990: 131). Thus, a great many contemporary discussions in the philosophy of mind often center on considerations in *semantics*—considerations, that is, having to do with such things as the truth conditions and referentiality of propositions.[10] This is not surprising; to the extent that thought is (among other things) discursive,[11] anyone who would understand mental content must give some account of the extent to which what thought is *about* involves (some would say *necessarily*) the kinds of abstractions—concepts, signifiers and signifieds, and so on—that many have posited to explain such things as what it is in virtue of which innumerable unique utterances count as expressions *of the same word*, and what makes it possible for the same word to refer to countless examples *of the same thing*.

This is the context, then, in which many contemporary philosophers are said to be engaged in the project of *naturalizing* mental content.[12] Thus, anyone who would take thought to be a constitutively natural phenomenon that is, as such, susceptible of scientific explanation must, ipso facto, also give some account of how such phenomena as *linguistic reference* are themselves so explicable. Among the issues here is to explain how anyone's *entertaining* discursive thoughts—how, for example, anyone's *doing something for a reason*—can figure in explanations of our behavior. Those who would "naturalize" mental content typically frame this as the problem of "mental causation"; how, that is, can anyone's *entertaining a belief* be understood to function as the *cause* of such things as bodily movements?[13] Clearly, bodily movements would seem to be the kinds of things that admit of scientific explanation. The problem arises from the fact that properly scientific ("naturalistic") explanations are generally thought to involve reference only to the kinds of concrete, particular things that can be causally efficacious. Insofar, then, as "scientific" (or "naturalistic") explanation, on this view, is thus always *causal* explanation, many proponents of naturalism have chiefly wished to explain how something like a *belief* or *reason* can *cause* anything.

This is why many contemporary philosophers of physicalist stripe hold

that (as G. F. Schueler has put it):

> [T]he truths (even assuming they are truths) that constitute the contents of . . . mental states cannot by themselves explain anything. Truths . . . are timeless, abstract entities. So, the reasoning goes, they cannot enter into explanations of actions "by themselves," but only via the agent's awareness of them (or via some other propositional attitude the agent takes toward them). It must, therefore, be the *things* ("mental states") that *have* these true or false contents that do the explaining. (Schueler 2003: 58)

In other words, abstract things like the contents of *reasons* or *beliefs* can only be thought to explain our behavior to the extent that they can be alternatively described as the *kinds* of things that can be thought to cause anything. On a physicalist version of this idea, the conceptual content that is represented as one's *reason* for acting some way is understood to have explanatory significance only insofar as it "really" consists in something else—in particular neurophysiological states or events, for example. On one view of the matter, such an attempt at "naturalizing" mental content more generally exemplifies the attempt to explain in terms of basically *empiricist* criteria—in terms of causal relations between particular existents—*how it is* that thought and language are about whatever they are about.

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I will say a little, in concluding with some intuitions of the Mīmāṃsakas, about some of the problems that such an account might be thought to have. But let me first sketch a case for thinking that some Buddhists developed arguments with affinities to the foregoing. It is striking that while Buddhists like Dharmakīrti were emphatically not physicalists—Dharmakīrti was a dualist if not an idealist—there turn out to be some significant ways in which their account of the mental involves intuitions that are fundamentally similar to those that inform contemporary physicalist attempts to "naturalize" mental content.[14] Thus, for Dharmakīrti, too, the criterion of being *really existent*—for being, as he says in a Buddhist idiom, *paramārthasat*—is being causally efficacious.[15] This is why, for Dharmakīrti, only unique particulars are finally real; you can get milk from some particular bovine critter, but you can't *do* anything with the abstract property of *gotva* ("being a cow"). Dharmakīrti's claim is not only an intuitively plausible tenet of empiricism, but also well serves characteristically Buddhist views regarding the person; for this thought recommends the conclusion that we should, on introspectively searching for a *self*, credit as "real" only those fleeting and particular sensations that alone are to be found.

It is because of this intuition that Dharmakīrti thus had to develop some account of the merely "conventional" character of the kinds of linguistic items that figure in mental content.[16] Dharmakīrti developed such an account in the form of an elaboration of the famously elusive *apoha* doctrine first introduced by his predecessor Dignāga, a doctrine that is rightly considered to represent the signal Buddhist contribution to the Indian philosophy of language but that can also be understood as an account, more generally, of *what thought is about*.[17] It is thus with his elaboration of the *apoha* doctrine that Dharmakīrti explains how thought can be *intentional* and yet be finally explicable in terms of the unique particulars that alone are ultimately real.[18] How, in other words, can it be the case that any thought having genuine epistemic content necessarily involves reference to universals, even though all that is given to us in perception is fleeting particulars?[19] How can each of us be immediately aware only of our own sensations and yet experience ourselves as all talking about the same things? These are the kinds of questions the *apoha* doctrine is meant to answer.

It would take us much too far afield for me to go into any detail about Dharmakīrti's elaboration of this complex doctrine.[20] For my purposes, it is enough to characterize this as an attempt to provide a finally *nonsemantic* account of the intentionality of awareness. In other words, if the intrinsic character of thought is to explain the "intentionality" of language (and not, as for Sellars, the other way around), then the account of thought cannot itself make reference to a semantic level of description. So, if Dharmakīrti wants to explain how *language* represents things based on a prior and independent understanding of how *awareness* does, his account cannot presuppose that we already understand how linguistic items mean what they are about; that is, indeed, just what this account is supposed to explain.[21]

The peculiarly thoroughgoing nominalism that Dharmakīrti developed in the form of his *apoha* doctrine can readily be seen to involve some of the same ideas in play in contemporary attempts at naturalizing mental content. Thus, Dharmakīrti's doctrine aims precisely to provide a fundamentally *causal* account of the *meaning* relation that Mīmāṃsakas, in contrast, take to be primary and irreducible. This is clear in the way that Dharmakīrti characteristically elaborates the kind of double negation that is typically taken to figure in the *apoha* doctrine. Thus, on a standard example, the Buddhist idea here is that a word like *cow* should be understood as finally referring only to whatever is "not a non-cow." The point of this claim is that we can understand the *content* of the concept 'cow,' and the content, by extension, of *thoughts that are about cows*, without specifying a really existent universal (such as "the

set of all cows," or the property "being a cow"). The basic idea behind this is that the determinacy of concepts is a function of *how much they exclude*, such that concepts are more precise just insofar as they exclude more. The differing scope of concepts is, then, just a function of their "exclusion" (which is all that *apoha* means) of all the other members of a branching categoreal hierarchy; "mammal," for example excludes "chariot" but not "cow" or "dog," while "cow" excludes not only chariots (and everything else in the world that is not a mammal) but also all mammals that are non-cows.

Chief among the problems for the *apohavādin*, though, is to explain why reference to what is "not a non-cow" does not presuppose precisely the kind of abstraction he claims to explain; for it would seem that we could only know what a *non*-cow is if we already know the content of the concept *cow*.[22] While I can't do justice to his arguments here, Dharmakīrti's idea is that this is best accomplished by reconstructing the claim in causal terms. Thus, Dharmakīrti argues that what is "excluded" from the range of things to which any word refers is *whatever particulars do not produce the same effect*. As Dharmakīrti puts the point, it is "by virtue of having the same effects and causes" (*ekasādhyasādhanatayā*) that distinct existents can and do fruitfully appear to cognition as examples of the same kinds.[23]

Now, there is much to say about how (or whether) Dharmakīrti's peculiarly causal elaboration of the *apoha* doctrine circumvents the problem of circularity; one could surely argue that the very idea of "sameness of effect" represents a universal of just the kind that Dharmakīrti claims to explain (although Dharmakīrti does have a sophisticated reply to this objection). Be that as it may, I want to emphasize that Dharmakīrti contends, significantly, that the "same effect" thus produced by any sensible object consists finally just in *the cognition that it causes*. So, for example, Dharmakīrti's autocommentary on *Pramāṇavārttika* 1.109 tells us that "cognitions are without difference insofar as they are causes of a single judgment (*ekapratyavamarśa*); the individuals [in question], too, are without difference, insofar as they cause the same cognition."[24] What is excluded from any concept, then, is finally whatever objects do not cause the kinds of *cognitive representations* that are brought under that concept.

Now, it turns out that this point relates closely to the peculiar form of Dharmakīrti's characteristic claim that linguistic cognition (*śābdaṃ jñānam*) is not a *pramāṇa* just insofar as it is reducible to the *pramāṇa* that is inference. One might suppose, in this regard, that what one infers, in the case of understanding somebody's speech, is that the speaker is (or is not) reliable with respect to the claim he or she is expressing. But this is not what

Dharmakīrti says; his view, rather, is that the inference in this case is from a particular linguistic item as *effect* to a speaker's intention as the *cause* thereof.[25] All that is really knowable, on this view, is *that* some speaker's intention has been expressed. But the specification of *what* that intention *is*, at least if we understand "intentions" as specifiable by propositions or some other such meaningful statements, is just what is ruled out by Dharmakīrti's account. As causally efficacious, the "intention" here could only be a unique particular, specifically, the subjectively occurrent representation that constitutes the speaker's "thought."[26] This is finally what Dharmakīrti is committed to in virtue of his thinking that concepts exclude from their scope whatever particulars do not cause the same kind of cognition.

Here, it is interesting to note the quotation with which Peter Scharf (who takes it from Bhartṛhari's commentator Helārāja) frames his essay "Early Indian Grammarians on a Speaker's Intention": *vaktṛvyāpāraviṣayo yo 'rtho buddhau prakāśate / prāmāṇyaṃ tatra śabdasya nārthatattvanibandhanam*.[27] As I would translate it, "Language is a reliable warrant in regard to that object *which appears in thought*, which is the speaker's object of engagement; it is not grounded in the reality of the object [itself]." Not inappropriately, Scharf takes the passage to reflect the Indian grammatical tradition's recognition that what utterances (and by extension, thoughts) are about is logically independent of *what there is*; after all, we know that our thoughts and utterances often fail to track reality. I suggest, however, that this unattributed quotation takes on new significance when we realize that it is from Dharmakīrti.[28] Dharmakīrti's, I take it, is the rather more radical point that thoughts can only ever be about the uniquely particular representations that are indubitably known to us through introspection (*svasaṃvitti*), and this for the reason that uniquely particular mental events are, for Dharmakīrti, all that finally exist for thoughts to *be* "about."[29] Thus, Tom Tillemans can rightly take Dharmakīrti's "fundamental position" on linguistic reference to be that "words are used according to the speaker's wishes and designate anything whatsoever which he might intend. The speaker is thus an authority as to what he is referring to in that he can ascertain his own intention by means of a valid cognition (*pramāṇa*), viz., reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*)" (2000: 163).

This, then, is what Dharmakīrti's "naturalistic" account of linguistic conventions finally looks like (where by naturalistic I mean, with many contemporary proponents of attempts to "naturalize" mental content, fundamentally *causal*): All that we can indubitably take any utterance to refer to is the subjectively occurrent representations that are present to the speaker himself or herself, which are, in turn, all that the speaker indubitably knows.

This is, moreover, because we are only entitled to infer that an utterance is the *effect* produced by some "intention" if that intention is finally understood as the *kind* of thing that could *cause* such an effect—which is to say, a unique particular (for only particulars have causal efficacy).[30] The unique particular, in this case, is a mental representation (what Dharmakīrti variously calls, e.g., *ākāra* or *ābhāsa*), which itself is to be understood as caused by whatever *it* is "about," and which is the basis for the "exclusion" (*apoha*) through which is constructed the conceptual content that makes the thought *expressible*. The upshot of this, though, is that what all utterances must really "mean or represent or be about" (to recur to Lynne Rudder Baker's [1987] formulation) is not "states of affairs."[31] Rather, they must all be finally explicable as *about* nothing more than their proximal causes.

There are many who have urged that this kind of view is the inevitable price to be paid for hewing to narrowly empiricist intuitions; if (as for Dharmakīrti) perceptual experience is taken as foundational for knowledge, then it follows that knowledge is ultimately based in the subjectively occurrent representations that are produced by our perceptual contact with the world. This is why Donald Davidson could say that empiricism just is "the view that the subjective ('experience') is the foundation of objective empirical knowledge" (Davidson 2001, 41).[32] Among the further upshots of this is that we must understand linguistic conventions not as constitutively social but as themselves the products of individual awareness. This is, in fact, just as Dharmakīrti repeatedly suggests throughout his discourse on *apoha*. Thus, in a succinct statement of his characteristic approach to that doctrine, Dharmakīrti says, "For example, when there is the possibility of expressing, with respect to things like the eye (whose result is a single cognition of form),[33] what has this effect without distinction, *someone can create a conventional expression* (*kaścit sāṃketikīṃ śrutiṃ kuryād*) for the sake of an understanding of all [such cognitions] at once—even without a separate universal as the form of that."[34]

But this is what many modern philosophers have dubbed the "Humpty Dumpty" theory of meaning—the view, as Michael Dummett puts it, "that a word, as uttered on a particular occasion, bears whatever meaning it does because the speaker invests it with that meaning" (1993: 49). The same kind of view is problematically entailed, as well, by the contemporary physicalist project of "naturalizing" mental content. Insofar as such an approach would have it that things like *having a belief* could have explanatory significance only if understood in terms of particular "mental states" inside a subject's head,[35] it becomes difficult to explain how the *content* of beliefs can depend on numerous factors—including a community of language users and the truth

conditions of the belief—not inside the head.[36] And if it is not the *contents* of our beliefs and reasons that figure in the explanation of our action, but simply "the *things* ('mental states') that *have* these true or false contents" (Schueler 2003: 58), then our beliefs and reasons really turn out to be epiphenomenal; if, in other words, it is only under a different description (say, *as instantiated in mental event X*) that a belief *does* anything, then its being a *belief* is finally beside the point. This is, to be sure, a conclusion that some have been willing to countenance.[37] The problem with it is that it is incoherent; for it is impossible, on such a view, to make sense of anyone's trying to persuade us of its truth. How, in other words, can it be thought that the *content* of beliefs is finally irrelevant to their description and at the same time be held that the content of the physicalist's own belief *about beliefs* is itself true?[38]

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Whether or not this line of argument is finally judged a successful refutation of physicalism, it is surely one that is seriously entertained by many contemporary philosophers. What I want to suggest in concluding is that Mīmāṃsakas can be understood to have developed some fundamentally similar intuitions, and that to that extent Mīmāṃsakas may, after all, have good reason to think there is something *irreducibly* linguistic about mental content. Among the Mīmāṃsaka arguments that can be enlisted here is one of those they offered in defense of the eternality (or, with Pollock, the "naturalness") of language. The argument, which Śabara first quotes from the no longer extant "*vṛtti*" on the *Mīmāṃsā Sūtras* of Jaimini, is a simple one, though I think it can be generalized in some interesting ways. The argument is that we cannot coherently imagine anyone's creating linguistic conventions without already having a language; for "some language must be used by the one who is creating the relation" (*avaśyam anena saṃbandhaṃ kurvatā kenacic chabdena kartavyaḥ*).[39] The point is that we can only imagine an act of meaning assignment—an act such as that consisting in the utterance "this [accompanied by an act of ostension] is to be called a *cow*"—as *itself* a linguistic act. Hence, the very act of creating such a convention does not stand to reason unless we presuppose that both the agent and the audience of this act already have the idea of *meaning* something. But that is just what the Buddhist theory, with its casually recurrent references to "someone's" creating linguistic conventions, was supposed to *explain*.

The challenge to the Buddhist here is not insignificant. What must be imagined is how anybody could *explain* to someone—how they could, that is, *tell* them—what it means to *mean* something. This must be imagined, moreover, without presupposing that the parties to this eminently semantic act

can already "think," if that means (as, I think, we can only imagine) something like *talk to themselves*. The point here is not a trivial one: no *particular* linguistic act can coherently be imagined to be the *first* such act, since it could only be intelligible *as* a linguistic act given the prior (and constitutively social) idea that an utterance could *mean* something.

Without endorsing their conclusion that language in general (and the Vedic texts in particular) must therefore be eternal, I suggest that we can understand the Mīmāṃsakas thus to have appreciated some profound and recalcitrant facts about our linguistic being. The intuitions here are analogous, it seems to me, to points Émile Durkheim was concerned to make about "social facts," which he understood perhaps chiefly in terms of "the irreducibility of reason to individual experience" (1995: 16). Vincent Descombes, in developing his broadly Hegelian argument for the constitutively social character of mind, follows Durkheim in thinking that what is called for, with respect to the socially rule-governed character of language use, is "an explanation that provides the institution's intellectual principle, but without seeking it in an individual consciousness" (2001: 59). Mīmāṃsakas can similarly be understood to have held that language, as always already "available" (*prasiddha*), cannot be explained by the causally describable workings of any individual awareness.

Still more generally, Mīmāṃsakas can be understood to have had the intuition that as constitutively *linguistic*, the intentionality of the mental must itself be understood as constitutively *social*; this, finally, is perhaps chief among the upshots of holding, as Sellars does, that our understanding of the intentionality of the mental should take its bearings from "whatever it is about linguistic episodes by virtue of which they stand for their senses."[40] Only in this way can we account for the fact that what thoughts (like sentences) are *about* is not the subjectively occurrent representations in our heads but the objective states of affairs that figure in our reasons for acting. And only if we thus understand what thought is about can we claim to understand mental content at all—even the *content* of the physicalist's own claims regarding the reducibility of beliefs.

There is, then, at least something to be said for supposing, with the Mīmāṃsakas, that we should (as Chisholm said of Sellars's approach) "explicate the intentional character of believing and of other psychological attitudes by reference to certain features of language," rather than conversely.[41] To the extent that is a tenable claim, the physicalist program of "naturalizing" mental content may be fundamentally problematic. To the extent, moreover, that this "naturalizing" approach consists most basically in *causal* explanation of a narrowly defined sort, it seems that Buddhists like Dharmakīrti may

be genuinely vulnerable to a Mīmāṃsaka line of argument that is not as easily dismissed as might be supposed. Whatever else they reflect, then, characteristically Mīmāṃsaka claims regarding the eternality of language reflect defensible intuitions in philosophy of mind.

For the present, though, all I mean to have done here is reframe a familiar Buddhist-Mīmāṃsaka debate in terms that at once follow and question Pollock's insightful characterization of these arguments. Appealing to an *ideological* sense of "naturalness" based in Bourdieu, Pollock has appropriately examined the self-authorizing character of orthodox Brahmanical discourse, enlisting the Buddhists as fellow critics who would instead urge the merely "conventional" status of that discourse; appealing, instead, to the *metaphysical* sense of "naturalism" that figures in much cognitive-scientific explanation, I have tried to characterize some problems with Buddhist reductionism, and to understand the Mīmāṃsakas as having grasped something significant about the *irreducibly* social and linguistic character of the mental. I would conclude simply by noting a point that Pollock, I think, would endorse: it is reflective of the great complexity of this South Asian discourse that the arguments here should admit of both readings.

Notes

[1] The desirability of claiming this led Mīmāṃsakas like Kumārila Bhaṭṭa to infer the existence of no longer extant parts of the Vedic corpus to underwrite branches of learning that do not obviously figure in the Vedas at all.

[2] I cite Barthes (here defining one of the tasks of "myth") as quoted with approval by Bruce Lincoln (1989: 5), whose analyses, like Pollock's, also owe much to Bourdieu. In a specifically Indological vein, see especially Lincoln's essay on the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (1989: 131–41).

[3] The context for Pollock's here considering the Buddhist tradition's critical engagement with Mīmāṃsā is that of its requiring some explanation that the Indian Buddhist tradition, for all its constitutive opposition to Brahmanical discourse, nevertheless made a decisive transition to the use of Sanskrit.

[4] Pollock 1990: 334, emphasis mine. As examples of Brahmanical counterattacks on Buddhist conventionalism, Pollock cites passages from Kumārila's *Tantravārttika* and Jayanta Bhaṭṭa's *Nyāyamañjarī*. It was in connection with this point that Pollock ventured (as the view of a "famous contemporary Mīmāṃsaka") an observation that I took as an epigraph in my book *Buddhists, Brahmins, and Belief*: "Mīmāṃsā has only one real enemy: Buddhism." See Arnold 2005: 97; the quote is from Pollock 1990: 342n.

[5] The relations among these various arguments is nicely brought out in Hayes 1988: 20–24.

[6] Roderick Chisholm, from "The Chisholm-Sellars Correspondence on Intentionality," as reprinted in Marras 1972: 215. Sellars's "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" can be read as centrally concerned to argue that (as Sellars says) "the categories of intentionality are, at bottom, semantical categories pertaining to overt verbal performances" (1956, 94). Sellars thought, that is, that an understanding of "the place of mind in nature" should take its bearings from an understanding of "whatever it is about linguistic episodes by virtue of which they stand for their senses" (1967, ix, 66–67, respectively). On the centrality of Chisholm's question concerning the right direction of explanation in subsequent debate, see also Boghossian 1989: 509–10, with footnote 5; and Brandom 2000: pp. 5–7—a section headed "Is *Mind* or *Language* the Fundamental Locus of Intentionality?"

[7] The range of thinkers for whom this is a central category includes such phenomenological philosophers (themselves very distinct from one another) as Husserl and Merleau-Ponty but also analytic philosophers as diverse as Putnam, Dennett, McDowell, and Fodor.

[8] This passage is immediately preceded by a bit that is almost invariably invoked in introducing the topic of *intentionality*: "Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously,

reference to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity." (1973:88) On some of the many issues raised by Brentano's passage, see Passmore 1957: 175–202.

[9] So, for example, John Searle argues that "Intentional states represent objects and states of affairs in exactly the same sense that speech acts represent objects and states of affairs" (1982, 260). Searle emphasizes, however, that "Language is derived from Intentionality, and not conversely. The direction of *pedagogy* is to explain Intentionality in terms of language. The direction of *analysis* is to explain language in terms of Intentionality" (260). But as I have suggested (following Chisholm on Sellars), the right direction of explanation is precisely one of the points at issue in the literature on this subject.

[10] A case in point is the decades-long discussion initiated by Hilary Putnam's "Twin Earth" thought experiment, on which see Pessin and Goldberg 1996.

[11] And just what role discursivity should be thought to have (how *basic* it is) is among the issues debated. Many of the contemporary arguments here can readily be understood as fundamentally similar to such Buddhist-Mīmāṃsaka debates as that concerning whether or not perception is or could be nonconceptual. See, in this vein, Arnold, 2009 for a reading of the Buddhists Dharmakīrti and Dharmottara inflected by John McDowell's characteristic arguments (as in McDowell 1996) that perception must be understood as constitutively involving "conceptual capacities."

[12] For a useful point of access to the discourse on this topic (and to the range of ways that philosophers have understood "naturalism"), see the essays in Gasser 2007.

[13] This idea figures centrally, for example, in Jerry Fodor's influential essay "Methodological Solipsism Considered as a Research Strategy in Cognitive Psychology" (1982).

[14] With regard to Dharmakīrti's not having been a physicalist, Paul Griffiths is right to argue that "[p]hysicalism in any form (identity theory, epiphenomenalism and so forth) is not an option" for this tradition of Buddhist thought (1986: 112). See, particularly in regard to Dharmakīrti, Taber 2003.

[15] So, for example, *Pramāṇavārttika* 3[*pratyakṣa*].3: *arthakriyāsamarthaṃ yat tad atra paramārthasat / anyat saṃvṛtisat proktaṃ te svasāmānyalakṣaṇe //* (Whatever has the capacity for causal efficacy is here said to be ultimately existent; everything else is conventionally existent. These two [sets consist, respectively, in] unique particulars and abstractions). My reference thus specifies that the third chapter of this work concerns *pratyakṣa* since, while this is not reflected in most of the available editions of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, there is a recently emergent scholarly consensus that Gnoli (1960, xv–xvi) is right about the order of chapters in the work and that the *pratyakṣa* chapter should be reckoned as chapter 3; the foregoing passage can be found in the edition of Pandeya (1989) at 64, where, as in most editions, it is represented as being in chapter 2.

[16] Dharmakīrti will refer to linguistic "conventions" as *saṃketa*; it is clear, though, that the point in characterizing these *as* "conventions" is to locate them on the side of "conventional truth" (*saṃvṛtisatya*), whereas the terms that figure in Dharmakīrti's *explanation* of these are credited as *paramārthasat*.

[17] See, on this point, Patil 2003.

[18] *Intentional*, in this case, means (with philosophers as diverse as Kant and Sellars, Husserl and Frege) essentially *semantic*.

[19] It should be acknowledged that putting the question this way is perhaps already to stack the deck against Dharmakīrti, or at least to think that some of his commentators (principally, Dharmottara) were right to ask whether perception could really count as a reliable way of knowing (i.e., as a *pramāṇa*) only insofar as it is "completed" by conceptual thought (and, if that's right, whether it should be allowed that perception really does have some conceptual component after all). Dharmottara thus argued that Dharmakīrti's project only makes sense if we somehow qualify his claim that perception does not involve any conceptual activity, a view that Georges Dreyfus (2007: 107) commends when he avers that "it is simply not possible to explain intentionality in the full-blown sense of the word without having recourse to conceptuality." Dreyfus acknowledges, though, that in crediting Dharmakīrti with having allowed as much, he is "using Dharmottara's ideas rather than Dharmakīrti's. I would argue, however, that from a philosophical perspective this is not a problem since the former seem to follow quite logically from the latter. I think it is not unreasonable to argue that Dharmottara said what Dharmakīrti ought to have said, or perhaps said implicitly, and proceed on this basis" (107, n.18). It does indeed represent a hermeneutically charitable reading of Dharmakīrti (and of Dharmottara's own claim to adequacy as an exegete of him) thus to take seriously Dharmottara's claim simply to have rightly discerned Dharmakīrti's purport. It is, however, also reasonable to read Dharmottara as quite significantly revising Dharmakīrti, a reading that would gain support from consideration of other respects in which Dharmottara clearly diverges from Dharmakīrti (e.g., in his treatment of *svasaṃvitti*, which seems to me to represent one of the places where it is clear that Dharmottara, unlike Dharmakīrti, may not be a Yogācāra at the end of the day). For more on Dharmottara vis-à-vis Dharmakīrti, see Arnold, 2009. Be all of that as it may, it remains clear that Dharmakīrti understood reference to conceptual content as necessary for a complete account of knowledge, and that the *apoha* doctrine is meant to reconcile that with Dharmakīrti's commitment to the view that perception is both constitutively *non*conceptual, and foundational for knowledge.

[20] For a lengthy elaboration of my understanding of this doctrine (and, as well, of some of the arguments against it that I will briefly consider here), see Arnold 2006.

[21] See, in this regard, Paul Boghossian's comment that on the various *dispositional* accounts that represent one way of naturalizing mental content, "the conditions must be specified purely naturalistically, without the use of any semantic or intentional

materials—otherwise, the theory will have assumed the very properties it was supposed to provide a reconstruction of" (1989: 538). Also relevant here is Michael Dummett's observation that "a theory of meaning for a particular language should be conceived by a philosopher as describing the practice of linguistic interchange by speakers of the language without taking it as already understood what it is to have a language at all: that is what, by imagining such a theory, we are trying to make explicit" (2004: 31).

[22] Kumārila's critique of *apohavāda* in the *Ślokavārttika* recurrently involves the charge that the doctrine is circular in this way. Richard Hayes succinctly makes the same point, writing, "One key problem that confronts [Dignāga's] interpretation of universals is this: If one does not know what each *u* must have in order to be counted within the range of the expression 'all *u*'s,' then one cannot determine whether a particular is qualified by the absence of all *u*'s or whether by the deniability of the absence of all *u*'s. But if one does know what each *u* must have to be counted within the range of 'all *u*'s,' then one knows exactly that which is ordinarily called a universal" (1988b: 186).

[23] Here I am paraphrasing part of Dharmakīrti's autocommentary on *Pramāṇavārttika* 1.68–70: *sā caikasādhyasādhanatayā anyavivekināṃ bhāvānāṃ tadvikalpavāsanāyāś ca prakṛtir yad evam eṣā pratibhāti tadudbhavā* / (Gnoli 1960, 38; the printing without vowel coalescence is per Gnoli). John Dunne translates: "Those things conceptualized as nondifferent are excluded from others in that they have the same effects and causes; there is also a cognitive imprint (*vāsanā*) that induces one to conceptualize those things in that fashion. The nature (*prakṛti*) of those distinct things themselves and the nature of that imprint are such that the cognition that arises from those things and that imprint appears in this way" (2004: 339).

[24] *ekapratyavamarśasya hetutvād dhīr abhedinī / ekadhīhetubhāvena vyaktīnām apy abhinnatā* // (Gnoli 1960, 56–57; cf. Dunne 2004, 121). Similarly, Dharmakīrti at one point explains that the singular "effect" that, say, various examples of the same "kind" of tree (*śiṃśapā*) relevantly produce is, in fact, "a unitary phenomenal appearance, which is a recognition" (*śiṃśapādayo 'pi bhedāḥ parasparānanvaye 'pi prakṛtyaivaikam ekākāraṃ pratyabhijñānaṃ janayanti*; Gnoli 1960, 41; cf. Dunne 2004, 344).

[25] Consider, as representative of the characteristically Dharmakīrtian account of the sense in which linguistic cognition is reducible to inference, a passage from Kamalaśīla that preserves the Sanskrit of Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* 5.1. Here, in regard to Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṃgraha* 1514 (which says that what is inferred from an utterance is a speaker's intention), Kamalaśīla explains, "And that intention is understood from the utterance because of [the utterance's] being the effect of that, but not as being [directly] expressible" (Shastri 1997: 376: *sā ca vivakṣā tatkāryatvād vacanāt pratīyate, na tu vācyatayā*). See also *Pramāṇavārttika* 1.213: *nāntarīyakatābhāvāc chabdānāṃ vastubhiḥ saha / nārthasiddhis tatas te*

hi vaktrabhiprāyasūcakāḥ // ("Since words have no inherent connection with things, there is no proof of objects based on them; for they [merely] express a speaker's intention"; text in Gnoli 1960: 107). Perhaps even more interesting is a passage from Dharmakīrti's autocommentary on *Pramāṇavārttika* 1.227: *arthaviśeṣasamīhāpreritā vāg ata idam iti viduṣaḥ svanidānābhāsinam arthaṃ sūcayatīti buddhirūpavāgvijñaptyor janyajanakabhāvaḥ sambandhaḥ* ("An utterance is impelled by an intention regarding a particular point; for one who knows that this [utterance thus] comes from that [intention,] the point expressed [by the utterance] is the phenomenal appearance which is its proper cause. Hence, there is a cause-effect relation between [an intention], whose form is mental, and its expression in speech"; text in Gnoli 1960: 113–14; cf. Dunne 2004: 146). This passage makes strikingly explicit the extent to which what all utterances, on this view, are finally *about* is just subjectively occurrent representations (and not, e.g., objective states of affairs).

[26] "Thoughts" are, then, on this view nothing like what, for example, Frege (who was almost as much a realist about linguistic abstractions as Mīmāṃsakas) meant by *thoughts*.

[27] Quoted by Scharf 1995: 66n.

[28] Specifically, the passage is *Pramāṇavārttika* 2[*pramāṇasiddhi*].[2]. On the order of chapters in the *Pramāṇavārttika*, see note 15, above; the present passage can be found in the edition of Pandeya (1989) at 3, where it is represented as the fourth verse of chapter 1.

[29] For a development of my understanding of the role that *svasaṃvitti* plays in Dharmakīrti's thought, see Arnold 2008.

[30] Cf. note. 15.

[31] It can reasonably be thought that the idea of "states of affairs"—the idea of things or events *as* characterized in some way or another, such that they can figure in what Wilfrid Sellars influentially called the "logical space of reasons" (1956: 76)—constitutively involves abstractions (properties, characteristics, propositions . . .). To say that thought is essentially *about* states of affairs can thus be another way to say that thought is contentful just insofar as it is *semantic*—and the suggestion here is that this is just what Dharmakīrti finally means to explain away with his *apoha* doctrine.

[32] See as well, Wolfgang Carl's characterization of Gottlob Frege's recurrently developed critique of psychologism: "Frege was particularly opposed to empiricism and psychologism, which, according to him, are connected with each other and lead in the long run to idealism. His own philosophical position as it emerges from his criticism of empiricism and psychologism can be described as an epistemology devoted to maintaining the objectivity of knowledge founded on the human capacity for grasping thoughts, a capacity manifested by our use of language." In contrast to the constitutively linguistic "capacity for grasping thoughts," Frege recognized that

"If empirical knowledge includes or is even based on perceptual knowledge and if sense perception requires sensations, then there can be no empirical knowledge without something subjective" (1994: 186, 192–93, respectively).

[33] Note that Dharmakīrti here again expresses his view that the relevantly similar "effects" produced by distinct particulars consist in subjectively occurrent cognitions.

[34] *Pramāṇavārttika* 1.141–42: *cakṣurādau yathā rūpavijñānaikaphale kvacit / aviśeṣeṇa tatkāryacodanāsambhave sati // sakṛt sarvapratītyarthaṃ kaścit sāṃketikīṃ śrutim / kuryād ṛte 'pi tadrūpasāmānyād vyatirekinaḥ //* (Gnoli 1960: 66). Dunne (2004: 353) translates: "For example, when at a certain time it is possible to express that the things such as the eye and so on, whose effect is an awareness of form, have that effect as their nondifference, someone forms a signifying expression so as to know all of those things as causes of ocular awareness at once; that sign is formed without a separate universal which would be their essence."

[35] Hence Fodor's emphasis on the need for "methodological solipsism" (see note 13).

[36] This is chief among the discussions advanced in the voluminous literature on Putnam's "Twin Earth" thought experiment, a thought experiment from which Putnam famously concluded that meaning "just ain't in the head" (see Pessin and Goldberg 1996: 13). As Dummett says that Frege (contra Husserl) recognized, "[A] word simply *has* a sense: its bearing that sense in the mouth of a speaker does not depend upon his performing any mental act or endowing it with that sense" (1993: 104).

[37] See, for example, Stich 1983.

[38] For a development of this line of argument, see especially Baker 1987: 113–74.

[39] The text is from Abhyankar 1976: 68. See Arnold 2006: 460 for the complete passage, with discussion. The same argument was favored by many of the Sanskrit "grammarians" (*vaiyākaraṇāḥ*)—and was familiar, as well, to Herder, who thus lampooned the Abbé Condillac's account of the origins of language out of basically animal "outcries of the emotion": "Condillac's two children get together without the knowledge of any sign and—lo!—from the first moment on we find them engaged in a mutual exchange. And yet it is only through this mutual exchange that they learn 'to associate with the outcry of emotions the thoughts whose natural signs they are.' Learning natural signs of the emotions through a mutual exchange? Learning what thoughts are associated with them? And yet being involved in an exchange from the first moment of contact on, even before the acquisition of a knowledge of what the dumbest animal knows, and being able to learn—under such conditions—what thoughts are to be associated with certain signs? Of all this I understand nothing" (translated in Gode and Moran 1966: 99–100).

[40] Cf. note 6, above.

[41] See note 6, above.

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12

The Social in Kashmiri Aesthetics: Suggesting and Speciously Savoring *Rasa* in Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta

Guy Leavitt

Sheldon Pollock makes a forceful and subtle argument in "The Social Aesthetic" (Pollock 2001) for the supercession of the social in Kashmiri theory by philosophical and theological interests. This essay attempts to explore the character and extent of that supercession by considering the evidence from a relatively emic perspective.[1] Such a reading may complicate the relationship between literary suggestion and the social, whereby the former in one of its guises—that of *rasa-dhvani*, the suggestion of aestheticized emotion—does apprehend the latter. It may also provide a differently weighted conclusion with respect to "invalid emotion" (*rasābhāsa*) in later Kashmiri theory, which builds on prior theory to explain how audiences reject socially proscribed feelings. Taken together, these points permit us to reconsider the proposition that the language-philosophical and theological turns in Kashmiri theory obscured the social-moral basis of Sanskrit literature. I would like to suggest that the new Kashmiri focal points seem to have largely supplemented, rather than supplanted, prior theory's grasp on the social. In that case, it would be useful to explore lines of inquiry in addition to "the social," which can augment Pollock's hypotheses on the causes of literary theory's transformation in Kashmir.

1. The Methodological Challenge of the Emic

Sheldon Pollock's work has come to operate on a scale that, in historical, cultural, literary and theoretical terms, is practically without parallel in contemporary scholarship on South Asia. He consistently asks the kinds of questions (concerning language, culture, and power, broadly speaking) that not only go far beyond those posed by the literary traditions he studies but also demand an entirely new macrohistorical analysis. There is no question

that his work has helped to show us many of the big issues the study of South Asia is poised to address or that he has taken the most difficult first steps in theorizing them. But it has also shown us just how ill-suited—on the microlevel of practically any given text, literary tradition, or local cultural world of precolonial South Asia—our present knowledge is to answer them, since that knowledge has largely been driven by other concerns. This seems to me to be one of the practical tensions that characterize much of Pollock's work: it is constantly forced to fill in the many lacunae in our knowledge at the level of individual texts even while generating theoretical critiques out of them at the level of traditions and even eras.

It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that between the emic and etic dimensions of analysis it is the emic that poses a significant challenge, simply because of the sheer volume of often very difficult material that has yet to be synthetically worked through in order to be useful on the macrolevel. Hence, for my contribution to this volume I would like to reconsider a few literary phenomena treated by Pollock, namely, suggestion and false affect in Kashmiri theory, which with further emic analysis may take on a different value in Pollock's etic analysis. My findings will differ in some respects from Pollock's, but, as he has said with reference to his own teacher, Daniel Ingalls, it is a difference "made possible only by the strong and serious arguments he himself provided in his magisterial scholarly oeuvre" (Pollock 2001: 199).

The specific slice of Pollock's research that I would like to address here concerns the transformation, as he has conceived it, of Sanskrit literary theory in Kashmir, from the ninth to the eleventh centuries. In contrast to most histories of Sanskrit poetics, in which the Kashmiri innovations and insights tend to take on a naturalized character (e.g., Pandey 1959), Pollock instead recasts them as radical breaks with an older and relatively stable literary theory.[2] He organizes them into two related major shifts, the first "from modes of literary production (writer-centered, prescriptive theory) to processes of literary cognition (reader-centered, descriptive theory)" in the course of the ninth century. Specifically, with Ānandavardhana came a language-philosophical turn, wherein literature was analyzed anew as verbal icon divorced from any social pragmatics. This first turn "brought with it" a second, "more fundamental transformation" in the tenth century concerned with the "affective response to literary representations" (Pollock 1998: 124). That is, with Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka and company came a sort of phenomenological and theological turn in which analytical focus shifted to aesthetic self-transcendence (Pollock 2001: 223).[3] The many moves that resulted in these new Kashmiri theories have yet to

receive the finely textured historical analysis they merit.[4] But it may be only now, with the aid of Pollock's macrohistorical narrative of just how radical that transformation in literary theory was, as well as its general differential contours, that such an analysis is even possible.

Especially important for our purposes is what the interrelated philosophical and religious turns in Kashmiri aesthetics share, in contrast with prior tradition, in Pollock's view, that is, their obscuration of the social ground of Sanskrit literature.[5] In the first case, the shift of analytical focus to language philosophy precluded an investigation of the very socioliterary conventions that suggestion presumed and without which it would be unintelligible (2001: 200ff.). And the new theory of *rasa* obscured the social proscription, and therefore the moral instruction, at play in a character's "invalid emotions" (*rasābhāsa*), since those emotions were now reanalyzed in the context of the audience's response (2001: 208ff.). These Kashmiri theories thus evince something like a new incapacity in literary theory to grasp the social. And even if earlier theory never did explicitly realize the fundamentally social bearings and content of Sanskrit literature, Bhoja's work in the first half of the eleventh century—which was in crucial respects continuous with it—did (2001: 216).

At stake here is both the historicity of this cultural transformation and its potential to significantly revise our historical narrative of Sanskrit literary culture. By identifying these philosophical and theological shifts in literary theory with a shared obscuring of the social-moral dimension of literature, Pollock implicitly delineates a broad cultural dichotomy: these new interests in philosophy and theology came at the expense of the social and the moral. It was an eclipse that, in the context of the theologization of *rasa* specifically, Pollock speculates "may have had to do with the changing sociality of the Indian aesthetic" (1998: 140).

> It was this old civic ethos of the literary that was gradually eroding in the troubled political sphere of eleventh-twelfth century Kashmir. . . . One may well ask whether it was this erosion that contributed to the production of the more inward-looking, even spiritualized Indian aesthetic, one that, despite the fact that historically it constitutes a serious deviation in the tradition, has succeeded in banishing all other forms from memory. (1998: 141)

It is the congruence between cultural form and its social conditions of possibility here—the old social aesthetic and its stable civic ethos versus the new spiritualized aesthetic and its destabilized polity—that would give so much force to this account of cultural change. Even in the form of hypothesis, it

helps to advance our thinking on the transformation of *rasa* theory in Kashmir, providing a potentially very significant line of inquiry for further research. But before we can begin to evaluate that congruence, we must submit the cultural opposition on which it rests—between the philosophical-theological and social-moral focal points in Kashmiri aesthetic theory—to investigation.

2. Suggestion as Social Affect

In "The Social Aesthetic," Pollock begins with the observation that *dhvani* is a literary device that is fundamentally social but was not recognized as such in the influential tradition inaugurated by Ānandavardhana (2001: 200ff.). That is, the social and literary conventions a reader requires in order to grasp the meaning suggested by *dhvani*—for example, those surrounding the illicit amorous rendezvous in much Prakrit poetry—were for the most part never theorized by Ānanda and his followers. This claim is borne out by the type of *dhvani* analyzed by Pollock, that is, *vastu-dhvani* (the suggestion of narrative content), but it remains open to question with respect to the other types of *dhvani* treated by Ānanda. An analysis of *vastu-dhvani* is important for its historical primacy since it was this variety that first posed the problem of suggestion to literary theorists and required an explanation in their poetics. On the other hand, it would be useful to consider the other varieties of *dhvani* as well, according to the relative importance Ānanda attributed to them, in order to make sense not only of the sociality of *dhvani* for Ānanda, but also of his theory's capacity to apprehend it.

2.1. The Suggestion of Rasa

While one is always wary of reading Abhinavagupta's influential *rasa*-centric view back into Ānandavardhana, it is nevertheless clear that of the three types of suggestion Ānanda analyzes (*vastu*, *alaṃkāra*, and *rasa* [the suggestion of narrative content, a figure of speech, or an aestheticized emotion]) the suggestion of *rasa* holds a privileged position. Several of Ānanda's most characteristic theses testify to *rasa*'s particular importance: that only one *rasa* should predominate in a work;[6] that it should serve as the telos around which a poem or play is constructed;[7] that it is the very life of a literary composition, the plot being merely its body (following Bhāmaha and Bharata);[8] that it belongs to that variety of suggestion (*vivakṣitānyaparavācya*) called the "soul" or "essence" (*ātman*) of suggestion (*DhĀ* 2.2K, 1940: 174); and so on. In fact, according to Lawrence McCrea, Ānanda's groundbreaking work was likely written specifically in order to provide a coherent account of *rasa*, which had come to represent an unresolvable anomaly within the formalist paradigm

of *alaṃkāraśāstra* (1998: chap. 2). Of course, given *vastu-dhvani*'s historical significance—which can be seen in the generation after Ānanda by the way in which its signature examples were made to stand in for *dhvani* as a whole by Jayanta Bhaṭṭa (Jayantabhaṭṭa 1982: 76)—this variety was not unimportant for Ānanda. Nevertheless, it did not concern what was most essential in poetry, as *rasa-dhvani* did, and it accordingly receives a great deal less analytical attention in his *Dhvanyāloka* than does *rasa-dhvani*.[9] Thus, it seems to me that the extent to which *dhvani* may be social for Ānanda, and his relative success in apprehending that sociality, can best be ascertained through a consideration of his understanding of *rasa-dhvani*.

As McCrea's work has shown, a great deal of the innovation in Ānanda's *Dhvanyāloka* lies in the teleological model of *mīmāṃsā* hermeneutics it employs in order to provide a coherent account of *rasa* (1998: chaps. 3–5). At the heart of this model is the new telos of the single *rasa* toward which all of the elements of a literary work must now contribute, either directly or indirectly. In order to evaluate the fit between these subordinate elements and the predominant element of *rasa* that is their goal, Ānanda develops an unprecedented all-embracing criterion, the principle of propriety (*aucitya*). Every constitutive part of a literary work—from a particular case ending to the work as a whole—can now be judged in terms of its appropriateness (*aucitya*) with respect to the *rasa* that is its final meaning.[10] What is significant for our purposes is that it is precisely within this *mīmāṃsā*-inspired teleological framework that Ānanda isolates and analyzes the social ground of *rasa* that was first articulated in dramaturgy. Specifically, he was able to turn a work's plot and action, which provide it with its social specificity and moral force, into suggestors of *rasa*. In Ānanda's system for the signification of aestheticized emotion, they become signifiers capable of being measured for their fit with their emotive signified by the standard of appropriateness. In the context of *rasa-dhvani*, it seems to have been exactly by means of Ānanda's semantic categories that the social is analytically realized.

For example, the first suggestor of *rasa* on the level of an entire work discussed by Ānanda is that of the plot that has been beautified by the appropriate constituents of *rasa* (*DhĀ*, 3.10–14; 1940: 329–34). Although one might suppose that Ānanda here merely restates the fact that the constituents of *rasa*—the basic emotions, their causes, their symptomatic effects, and so on—communicate *rasa* only through the vehicle of suggestion, in fact his point is to highlight their social ground. Appropriateness is again the evaluative key: these emotive states will be appropriate if they are appropriate to their characters—and they will be appropriate to their characters only if

the latter conform strictly to the social-moral typology set forth in Bharata's dramaturgical treatise, the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.[11] Thus, characters must belong to one of three classes, which are hierarchically ordered not only in social status (gods, kings and Brahmins, for example, belonging to the upper class) but also in moral value (the lower class being murderous, treacherous, lustful, etc.) (*NŚ*, 24.3–15a-b; 1981: 393–97). The emotions of which they are capable are similarly tied to that hierarchy: it is only the highest characters who may display, for example, the heroic sentiment (*vīra-rasa*). And those character classes can never be confused, lest, for example, socially-morally high characters be debased (as in the case of the description of vulgar sex on the part of the gods).[12] Thus, Ānanda elegantly imported the entire *rasa* apparatus of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* into his own categories, wherein the suggestive signification of *rasa* on the part of its constituent elements (the primary emotions, etc.) depended centrally on his criterion of appropriateness as it comprehended and foregrounded the characters' sociality.

Another suggestor of *rasa* to highlight characters' morality is the five plot junctures or segments in which the five corresponding stages (*avasthās*) of the hero's successful activity unfold (*DhĀ*, 3.10–14V; 1940: 336ff.). Although Ānanda does not elaborate at length on this point, Abhinava succinctly explains its logic.

> [The poet] should instruct [an audience] in the means to good and bad ends by situating those [means] in the hero and antagonist respectively, such that the one who acts by proper means succeeds and the one who acts by improper means fails. And a means employed by an agent is divided into five stages [as in the case of the hero's activity].[13]

Abhinava clarifies that *rasa* is the means of that instruction.

> Immersion in the heart consists of nothing but the savoring of *rasa* [aestheticized emotion]. And this *rasa* is brought about by the conjunction of emotive factors, a conjunction which is invariably connected with instruction in the four life-aims. Thus, it is merely the fact that a man succumbs to savoring *rasa* (in a literary work whose emotive factors are appropriate to *rasa*) that causes the instruction which will naturally result. Thus, delight itself is the cause of instruction.[14]

While Ānanda obviously did not ascribe to the particular *rasa* aesthetic presumed in Abhinava's comment, it is clear from Ānanda's remarks elsewhere that Abhinava is very close to his thinking.

> [Audience members] whose conduct is in need of improvement, once

> they've been captivated by the elements of the erotic sentiment, will receive instruction on good conduct without difficulty. For, the various types of play, such as *nāṭaka*s and the like, which are essentially instructions on good conduct, have been sent down [from heaven by Bharatamuni] for the sole benefit of people in need of moral improvement.[15]

It is the hero's activity in particular that instructs the audience in moral behavior, and if it is not properly embodied in its unfolding via the plot's segments, the manifestation of *rasa* will suffer. Conversely, it is in being emotively engaged by a play's *rasa* that an audience can effectively take to heart the example of the hero's activity and be morally improved. Such views are not substantially different from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*'s own foundational articulation of the relationship between literary delight and instruction (*NŚ* 1.11ff.; 1992: 10). What is new here is that the relationship is now grounded in the categories of suggestion, specifically in the successful moral action of the hero, the stages of whose activity become a suggestor of the play's *rasa*s.[16]

2.2. Suggestion and the Problem of the Social

By submitting the question of the social to the phenomenon most valorized in Ānanda's criticism, that is, *rasa-dhvani*, it becomes clear that literary theory in Kashmir was capable of recapitulating and significantly extending the key social-moral categories of Sanskrit literature. That it did not, or perhaps could not, in the case of *vastu-dhvani* is a key point raised in Pollock's analysis, which goes on to provide a convincing reason for it: "It is the very taken-for-grantedness" of the social text of the Prakrit world "that renders it invisible to readers like Ānanda" (2001: 208). Just as intuitive is his further hypothesis that the language-philosophical turn in Kashmir played a causal role in producing the practical invisibility of the social: "When both readerly expectation and theoretical concern are focused on the linguistic mechanisms of meaning, and the complexities that allow different meanings to occur, the social conditions of aesthetic suggestion escape observation let alone interrogation" (208). While this generalization seems not to apply to *rasa-dhvani*, since *rasa* is already a thoroughly social category, it does explain how it was that the social ground of *vastu-dhvani* was not a problem for the Kashmiri theorists.

And yet, as Pollock's focus on their interpretive differences implies, it is almost as if it was a real problem for them (Pollock 2001: 202–7).[17] For my part, I believe it was a problem in appearance only. Although there is a history of commentarial augmentation and to some extent dispute in *dhvani* interpretation, there appears to have been near total unanimity on the part

of both the proponents of *vastu-dhvani* and their critics about the semantic content of literary suggestion (or its equivalents, such as inference), as well as of the socioliterary conventions it presumed. From at least Abhinavagupta's commentary on Ānanda's great work forward, the commentators (and even the most intrepid of critics, such as Mahimabhaṭṭa) were largely in agreement on both counts. Take perhaps the most famous example, the *bhama dhammia* verse, a hallmark in *dhvani* analysis.

> Roam freely, gentle monk.
> The little dog was killed today
> by the fearsome lion
> who lives in the dense foliage
> on the banks of the Godāvarī.[18]

There seems to be little disagreement about either the suggestion involved here—the permission to "roam freely," suggesting a prohibition of roaming near the riverside foliage—or its social context: the speaker is a woman motivated by a desire to save her trysting place from the intrusion of the monk. What was disputed was the role of the ancillary elements necessary to logically complete the scene. For example, one may ask: if the monk had already been scared by the dog, why would the speaker need to invent a lion? The solution finally settled on—that the dog must have scared the mendicant somewhere other than the riverside, requiring the invention of another animal specifically at the riverside—is indicative of the fact that such problems, and the disagreements they engendered, were logistical in nature and did not bear centrally on either the suggestion at issue or the widespread agreement concerning the social context and literary conventions it presumed. If interpretive differences had hinged on the stability of that context or impinged on the reader's grasping a suggested sense, they would have constituted a problem in need of resolution. But in fact just the opposite was the case: it was because of its very taken-for-grantedness, its virtual invisibility—which seems in part to have been reproduced by the stability of the social in *dhvani* analysis—that the social subtext remained a nonproblem for thinkers like Ānanda.

Thus, in focusing attention on the linguistic processes by which *vastu-dhvani* operates rather than on the socioliterary conventions it presumes, the language philosophical turn may very well have helped to occlude the social. But as the review of *rasa-dhvani* above indicates, the failure of *vastu-dhvani* analysis to grasp the social is not generalizable to *dhvani* analysis as a whole, let alone to Kashmiri theory more broadly. While the language philosophical turn in Kashmir may have helped to foreclose the theorization of the social in

one case, it appears to have helped to realize it in another. That the analytical occlusion of the social was not definitive of the new direction taken by Sanskrit literary theory in Kashmir is reinforced, I believe, by a reconsideration of the second literary phenomenon examined by "The Social Aesthetic," the false semblance of an emotion (*rasābhāsa*).[19]

3. Improper Emotion as Aesthetic Instruction

Pollock has highlighted the way in which the literary device that is perhaps most manifestly social, *rasābhāsa*, also appears to have obscured the social in Kashmiri poetics, if to a lesser extent than did *dhvani* analysis. *Rasābhāsa*, beginning with the early-ninth-century theorist Udbhaṭa, referred to the aestheticized emotion (of a character) that becomes manifest in such a way as to transgress social norms. With the shift in Kashmir, however, from *rasa* as an affect of the literary character to the affective awareness of the spectator, *rasābhāsa* was similarly reconceived in the context of the audience. Pollock suggests that this reorientation deflected analytical attention away from what was so important about *rasābhāsa*—that is, its being a key to "the moral discourse that lies at the heart of literature" (2001: 214)—and toward psychological and axiological concerns that were in effect beside the point.[20] While not disagreeing with this shift in the Kashmiris' concerns, I would like to explore the possibility that they may still have participated in that moral discourse, albeit from the vantage point of a psychology of response.

To begin with, it should be noted that Abhinava accepted all of the character-centered thinking on *rasābhāsa* that preceded him, and elaborated on it in crucial respects. Roughly a generation after Udbhaṭa's mid-ninth-century commentator (Indurāja), Abhinava systematically elaborated *rasābhāsa* through the categories of *rasa*. In the process, he specified the social content of the impropriety Udbhaṭa mentions but in his conciseness does not explain. For Abhinava it is simply a deviation from the norms valorized by Ānanda's principle of propriety, which were grounded in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*'s social-moral typology of characters in the context of *rasa*. The content of an *ābhāsa* thus becomes an emotion's deviation, in all of its constituent elements (i.e., its causes, symptoms, and dependent emotions), from that normative classification. In particular, as Abhinava's examples demonstrate, an emotion becomes improper if it runs counter to its character's own nature (e.g., fear on the part of demons) and is unsuitable to the object (*vibhāva*) that evokes it (e.g., Rāvaṇa's desire for Sītā). In the former example, demons trembling at the thought of Krishna would convey not the real transitory emotion, "terror" (*trāsa*), but the false semblance of it, because such an emotion is inappropriate

to demons who, as Bharata emphasizes, are furious by nature in all their activities.[21] Abhinava's second example requires a more involved explanation because its psychologization of characters is explicit and its aesthetics of reception does more to bring literature's moral dimension into sharp relief.

The shift of *rasa* from character to audience, that is, from being the fully realized primary emotion of a character to its aesthetic experience on the part of an audience, posed a significant problem for *rasābhāsa*. In what sense could the audience's experience be considered invalid (an *ābhāsa*)? The problem becomes more acute given the *rasa* doctrines Abhinava commits himself to elsewhere, beginning with the view that *rasa* is the depersonalized savoring of an emotion (*bhāva*) (e.g., *ABh* ad *NŚ*, 6.31; 1992: 273.1ff.). It follows that *rasa* will be an *ābhāsa* if the emotion of which it consists is one. But for Abhinava, an emotion in an aesthetic context can only really be communicated and experienced in all its vitality not through abstract inference but via suggestion and savoring (*carvaṇā*) (e.g., *L* ad *DhĀ*, 1.4; 1940: 78.9–12), which is based on the audience's sympathetic response (*hṛdaya-saṃvāda*) and identification (*tanmayībhāva*) (e.g., *Abh* ad *NŚ*, 1.107; 1992: 36.4ff.). Thus, insofar as *rasābhāsa* is still in some sense savored or perceived as a *rasa* is, the audience will participate in and feel for themselves the inappropriate emotion (*bhāvābhāsa*) that is its content. Indeed, insofar as such emotions are to be experienced by the audience at all, they cannot lie beyond an audience's sympathetic response and remain cognizable only in the abstract. According to his own positions, then, Abhinava is forced to admit into his aesthetics emotions the manifestation of which transgresses society's norms. In doing so, however, he risks aestheticizing their immorality away—or worse, valorizing it with the moral and edifying character of *rasa* experience.

3.1. The Model of Erroneous Cognition

Abhinava seems to have resolved this dilemma by interpreting *rasābhāsa* as a type of erroneous cognition (a false emotive response on the part of the audience) that will be sublated by a correct cognition (an appropriate emotive response). The model for such cognitions is provided by theories of error (*bhrānti*) in philosophical discourse. To take the stock example, that of a piece of mother-of-pearl and silver: on account of their similarity, a piece of mother-of-pearl may be mistaken for a piece of silver in one's erroneous cognition of it—until that cognition is sublated by a correct one. Abhinava's interpretation is facilitated by the fact that the key term in *rasa-ābhāsa*—that is, *ābhāsa* (a false appearance or semblance)—as well as its cognates (*avabhāsa*, *pratibhāsa*, etc.) play a similar role in mistaken cognition. It is because the piece of mother-

of-pearl "falsely appears" (*avabhāsate*) like silver that it can be mistaken for it. Similarly, it is because one emotion (*bhāva*) falsely appears like another (as a *bhāvābhāsa*) that it can be speciously savored (*carvaṇābhāsa*) as it (its *rasābhāsa*). Unlike mistaken cognition in the world, however, the content of erroneous aesthetic experience is always an improper emotion or behavior whose sublation will instruct the audience. Reference to Abhinava's discussion of *rasābhāsa* shows just how seamlessly he wedded this erroneous aesthesis to the narrative impropriety that had characterized *bhāvābhāsa* and *rasābhāsa* since Udbhaṭa's definition of them.

Abhinava relies both on Bharata's causal account of emotion and on Udbhaṭa's commentator, Indurāja, to show how the audience's miscognition is based on a more fundamental miscognition in the character. Whereas Udbhaṭa had listed the causes of an emotion's or a *rasa*'s inappropriate manifestation as "desire, anger and the like," Indurāja filled in the lacuna ("and the like") with the cause, "delusion" (*moha*).[22] Thus, Abhinava could recast improper emotions in terms of cognitive error: it is on account of Rāvaṇa's delusion that he mistakes Sītā for a lover who is as enamored of him as he is of her, and so he mistakenly feels the passion that one would feel for a real lover. Abhinava here recapitulates all of the thinking on *rasābhāsa* that preceded him, in isolating the impropriety involved (acting on unreciprocated desire) and psychologizing it (in delusion). But he goes beyond it both to speak of that delusion in terms of cognitive error and to identify it as the reason the emotion portrayed appears falsely in the audience's awareness. Since in Bharata's analysis emotions are evoked or caused by their objects, the "false appearance of an emotion" (*bhāvābhāsa*) in Rāvaṇa must be based on his miscognition of Sītā, who, in not reciprocating his love, is not a genuine cause of "passion" but the false appearance of one (a *vibhāvābhāsa*).

And yet, Sītā can temporarily appear to be a genuine cause of passion because Rāvaṇa's delusion goes unchecked, and so his actual transitory emotion of desire can appear as, and be erroneously experienced as, the stable emotion of passion, which is in fact proper only to reciprocated love.

> The passion here (in the false appearance of love [*śṛṅgārābhāsa*])—which is desire in the form of pure longing—is a transitory emotion, not a stable one. Yet it appears like the stable emotion (of love). Under its influence, the causes, (effects and dependent emotions of that transitory desire) falsely appear as the causes, etc., (of a genuine passion). And so, that "passion" falsely appears as a stable emotion since (the thought), "Sītā hates me or is indifferent to me," never crosses Rāvaṇa's mind. For, were it to cross his mind, even his longing would completely dissipate.[23] Rather, (what does hold

> sway over his mind) is just the certainty that Sītā is fond of him, which serves no purpose because it is in essence a delusion born of desire.[24] It is like the false appearance of silver in (an erroneous cognition of) a piece of mother-of-pearl.[25]

Thus, the improperly manifested emotion that since Udbhaṭa's time had defined *bhāvābhāsa* remained at the core of Abhinava's understanding of it. But he also reinterpreted *bhāvābhāsa* in terms of cognitive error on the part of the character, which served in turn as the basis of an aesthetic miscognition on the part of the audience. This reinterpretation allowed Abhinava to address how it is that audiences can temporarily identify with, and aesthetically experience, even socially proscribed emotions. To take the example at hand, the spectators, in identifying with Rāvaṇa's state of mind, overlook their accurate understanding of the causal connection between Sītā and Rāvaṇa's desire; hence, they can perceive his desire as if it were not inappropriate.[26] Such experience is possible, according to Abhinava, if essentially the immediate dramatic scene (its characters, the emotions they manifest, etc.) appears like the one that is normally enjoyed and expresses the socially sanctioned emotions and behaviors of *rasa* experience.

3.2 Impropriety's Sublation in Humor

Of course, perhaps the key reason Abhinava interpreted *ābhāsa* along the lines of cognitive error was to explain not only the possibility of such a socially transgressive aesthetic experience but also its sublation. According to the analogy, just as the erroneous cognition of silver for a piece of mother-of-pearl will be sublated by a correct cognition, so should an audience's false emotive awareness (*rasābhāsa*) in experiencing, for example, Rāvaṇa's delusional desire for Sītā be sublated by a correct one—one that affectively apprehends its immorality. Abhinava was able to find such a solution to the problem of *rasābhāsa* by creatively grounding the latter in the categories and precepts of Bharata's authoritative dramaturgical work, the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The term, *rasābhāsa*, is unknown to the perhaps sixth-century *Nāṭyaśāstra*, being a coinage of Udbhaṭa's at the beginning of the ninth century. Abhinava nevertheless reads it back into the text by identifying it with the term in the text, *śṛṅgārānukṛti* (the imitation of the erotic sentiment), in which *śṛṅgāra* (the erotic sentiment) is taken to stand for all of the sentiments metaphorically and *anukṛti* (imitation) is read as a synonym of *ābhāsa* (false appearance).[27] With this simple exegetical turn, Bharata becomes the authority for the correct cognition that sublates *rasābhāsa* because he states that the imitation

of the erotic sentiment (now read as *rasābhāsa*) gives rise to the sentiment of humor (*NŚ*, 6.40a–b; 1992: 289).[28] The natural semantic force of humor in this context of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is underdetermined—it could merely indicate the humor of the incongruous, where mock love makes for lighthearted mirth. With Abhinava's interpretation, however, it takes on powerful new cognitive and moral roles. It is now the aesthetic experience by means of which the audience apprehends the impropriety in the emotion it has just "tasted" and affectively rejects it, just as with the correct cognition of the piece of mother-of-pearl one rejects the prior cognition of silver.

The passage in which Abhinava demonstrates the mechanics of *rasābhāsa*'s sublation is corrupt and has not, I think, been well understood. Specifically, the causality of *rasābhāsa*—in contradistinction with *bhāvābhāsa*—needs greater emphasis for the moral force of his aesthetics to be appreciated. For only *rasābhāsa* engenders the "correct" emotive response of humor according to Abhinava's interpretation of Bharata, where the sentiment of humor is said to arise from the imitation of the erotic *rasa*, never its *bhāva* (passion). Thus, for Abhinava the audience must "taste" or aesthetically experience a character's impropriety in order to affectively reject it in the *rasa* of humor. In his words:

> It is true that in (a brief excerpt) of "Rāvaṇa's Poem" such as,
>
> > "Ever since I heard her name, which is like a spell that mesmerizes and draws (me to her),[29] my mind has not been steady even for a moment. . . ."
>
> there is only a false appearance of (the stable emotion), passion, and no manifestation of (the stable emotion), humor. Nevertheless, since Rāvaṇa's words are both at variance with their cause, Sītā, and opposed to his own character, when they in their impropriety come to embody a false appearance of the sentiment of love—(which they will, with the aid) of such ephemeral emotions (of love-in-separation) as anxiety, depression, and confusion, and in the context of the physical symptoms (of that love-in-separation) such as shedding tears and lamentation—(at that point) they will become a cause of (the sentiment), "humor."[30]

This passage shows why *bhāvābhāsa* does not itself lead to the *rasa* of humor: it must first be aesthetically experienced as *rasābhāsa* by way of the additional factors of its transitory emotions (*vyabhicāribhāvas*) and physical symptoms (*anubhāvas*),[31] which is how all stable emotions (*sthāyibhāvas*) produce *rasas* per Bharata's definition (*NŚ*, 6.31 prose; 1992: 266.3). It is not the bare communication and perception of an inappropriate emotion that prompts an awareness of its improper object and induces the audience's laughter, but its aesthetic experience.[32]

Thus, it seems to me that Abhinava used *rasābhāsa* to theorize a self-consciously moral emotive response. Unlike the unselfconsciously moral awareness of *rasa*, whose content is always unmarked in adhering to its normative and naturalized categories, *rasābhāsa* entails a realization of social and moral impropriety. As Abhinava argues, it does so almost by definition, since it is the inappropriate manifestation of emotion alone (which had always been the hallmark of *rasābhāsa*) that turns *rasābhāsa* into a cause of the sentiment of humor.[33] And the genres dominated by *rasābhāsa* and its affective sublation in humor realize that impropriety to remarkably didactic effect. Satires, for example—in which the false appearance of the *rasa* of tranquility in particular is generated by hypocritical spiritual aspirants and the like—instruct the audience to renounce impropriety in all of the four life aims.[34] Given this interest of Abhinava's in *rasābhāsa*'s didactic function, it is perhaps less surprising that his student, Kṣemendra, would go on not only to become one of the most prolific satirists in the history of Sanskrit poetry, but also to produce a new poetics that proclaimed propriety to be the very life force of *rasa*. Thus, while the new Kashmiri interest in the psychology of *rasa* experience led to a significant revaluation of *rasābhāsa* in terms of the audience's emotive response, it nevertheless does not seem to have prevented Abhinava from presupposing and fully rearticulating the older analytical concern with the social impropriety that is constitutive of all literature. And, as I have tried to show, it also enabled him to augment that concern with an innovative new account of the possibility and mechanics of a self-consciously moral aesthetic experience.

4. Conclusion

What I have attempted to do here is to explore a relatively consistent emic approach to the Kashmiri theorists' capacity to apprehend the social and moral dimension of Sanskrit literature. From this perspective, Ānandavardhana's *dhvani* analysis can be seen to realize the social anew in his all-embracing criterion of propriety, by which the social ground of *rasa* is foregrounded in a plot's characters and the relative morality of their action. And Abhinava, in modeling *rasābhāsa* on cognitive error, can be seen to provide a more nuanced psychological account not only of a character's improper emotions but also of an audience's aesthetic experience and affective rejection in their response. More could be said for each thinker, but I think this may be enough to show that the new Kashmiri theories of *dhvani* and *rasa* did not come, straightforwardly at least, at the expense of literary theory's social-moral bearings or analytical capacity. They appear not only to have supplemented

that capacity but to have extended it. That there appears to have been no unambiguous turn away from the social in Kashmiri literary theory makes it more difficult to directly tie these revolutionary shifts in literary culture to fundamental changes in their conditions of possibility with the disintegration of the Kashmiri courtly sphere. The destabilization of that sphere probably did play a role in the transformation of aesthetics in Kashmir, but to get at it we will most likely need to track other fault lines in addition to both the social and, given the character of Ānanda's poetics, the theological.

In the study of South Asia's textual practices, Pollock has long led the way in showing us that we cannot begin to ask many of the questions most worth asking if we cannot step outside the Sanskrit tradition's categories and priorities long enough to see the ways in which the tradition itself naturalized them. Unfortunately, the kind of macrohistorical, etic analysis demanded by such questions often requires a vast array of relatively local, emic analyses that for many areas in South Asian intellectual history simply do not yet exist. To take only the example of Pollock's promising hypothesis, which ties a shift in the new sensibilities of Kashmiri literati to their often dramatically altered social world, we still have no thoroughgoing account of one of the most celebrated and well-studied figures in premodern Kashmir, namely, Ānandavardhana, whose new poetic sensibility may have been the most radical in Indian history up to that point. There is a remarkably deep anxiety that underlies Ānanda's new concern that Sanskrit literary culture had become exhausted, lifeless, and repetitive—and that there was little available in contemporary poetics to renew it. In many ways, what we see in Ānanda appears to be a highly self-conscious reflexive turn signifying an epistemic break with the reading practices of the past, but we have yet to appreciate the full extent of that break, let alone to probe whether it was part of the normal autonomization of the literary field (Bourdieu 1996: 241ff.) via a new adjacency of disciplinary discourses (McCrea 1998) or was more directly tied to changes in the sociopolitical sphere. This is to say nothing of the many other, less well-studied poeticians who populated medieval Kashmir's vibrant literary culture. We have a long way to go before our knowledge on the level of individual texts and thinkers will permit us to comprehensively answer such important questions on the macrolevel of eras. But Pollock's studies have served the crucial function of highlighting exactly where we are in need of more detailed emic analysis and along which lines of inquiry. And in doing so, they have played the equally important disciplinary role of expanding the horizon of our research possibilities with questions and insights that will continue to make the study of South Asia and its literary history relevant to disciplines across the humanities.

Abbreviations

DhĀ = The *Dhvanyāloka of* Ānandavardhana

L = The *Locana* of Abhinavagupta on the *Dhvanyāloka of* Ānandavardhana

NŚ = the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharatamuni

Notes

[1] I use the term *emic* in its conventional sense to refer to interpretations that work within the system of cultural self-understanding at issue, without necessarily implying that its correlate, *etic*, is free of emic characteristics (Lévi-Strauss 1976).

[2] Here and throughout I refer to "theory in Kashmir," "Kashmiri theory," or "Kashmiri theorists" to denote *rasa/dhvani* theory and its Kashmiri proponents, following Pollock's broad historical opposition. For the purposes of this essay, the strident opponents in Kashmir of *dhvani* in particular, such as Mukulabhaṭṭa and company, are bracketed unless they also were significant *rasa* theorists, such as Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka.

[3] Contributing to Pollock's argument is the Vedantic homology by which Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka conceived of the dramatic spectacle, which has yet to receive the scholarly attention it deserves: *yathā hi kalpanāmātrasāraṃ tata evānavasthitaikarūpaṃ kṣaṇena kalpanāśatasahasrasahaṃ svapnādivilakṣaṇam api suṣṭhutarāṃ hṛdayagrahanidānam atyaktasvālambanaBrahmakalpanaṭoparacitaṃ RāmaRāvaṇādiceṣṭitam asatyaṃ kuto 'py abhūtādbhutavṛttyā bhāti...* (*ABh ad NŚ,* 6.1c-d; 1992: 5.16–21). Cited also in Masson and Patwardhan 1969: 22. Nāyaka's language is echoed by Abhinava throughout his commentary (though to somewhat different purposes), for example, *so 'smīty anena svātmāvaṣṭaṃbhasyātyājyatām āha* (*ABh ad NŚ,* 26.8; 1981: 465.3). The homology is worked out (from the perspective of the Śaiva ontic levels [*tattvas*]) in Abhinava's benedictory verses to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*'s chapters (see Leavitt, forthcoming: chap. 4).

[4] The complexity of these shifts, considered as such, is noteworthy. While theological speculation on *rasa* (i.e., *śānta-rasa*) began at least with Udbhaṭa (ca. 800) in the court of the Kashmiri king, Jayāpīḍa, *rasa* seems to have been first considered in *alaṅkāra-śāstra* as an experience of the audience with Rudraṭa (first half of the ninth century) (*KA* 12.1; Rudraṭa 1886: 149). It is true that both trends by all accounts culminated in a particularly sophisticated form in Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's aesthetic, but also that the origins of both predated Ānandavardhana (third quarter of the ninth century), the great aesthetician who inaugurated the first, language-philosophical shift. Highlighting the historical unevenness of these shifts, Ānanda's discussion of *rasa* is primarily production oriented, with clear reference to the author and character, although he also implies the locus of the audience in a gustatory metaphor that echoes the foundational *Nāṭyaśāstra* (*NŚ,* 6.32–33; 1992: 284): *yā vyāpāravatī rasān rasayituṃ kācit kavīnāṃ navā dṛṣṭir...* (*DhĀ,* 3.43V; 1940: 508.1–2). See also Pollock 1998: 125.

[5] Just "how fundamentally the social grounds Sanskrit literary theory" (2001: 199) is succinctly explained by Pollock in his seminal study of Bhoja: "The world of the text and the world itself are as mutually intertwined for Bhoja as they were for all other *ālaṅkārika*s before him. Even if Indian thinkers do not often thematize the matter and concentrate instead on formal or language-philosophical dimensions, the criticism of poetry remains for all of them fundamentally a criticism of life, since in the last analysis the correct reading of Sanskrit literature requires a correct understanding of and subscription to a larger social theory" (1998: 141).

[6] *eko raso 'ṅgī kartavyas teṣām [nānārasānām] utkarṣam icchatā* (*DhĀ*, 3.21; 1940: 378).

[7] *vācyānāṃ vācakānāṃ ca yadaucityena yojanam | rasādidviṣayeṇaitat karma mukhyaṃ mahākaveḥ* (*DhĀ*, 3.32; 1940: 400).

[8] *rasādayo hi dvayor api tayor [vṛttyoḥ] jīvabhūtāḥ. itivṛttādi tu śarīrabhūtam eva* (*DhĀ*, 3.33; 1940: 401.12–13).

[9] One index of *rasa-dhvani*'s importance for Ānanda is its taxonomical centrality. The internal differentiation of the *asaṃlakṣyakrama* variety of *dhvani* is unparalleled, beginning with the analysis of emotion in its phases and guises (*bhāva-praśānti*, *bhāvābhāsa*, etc.).

[10] While Ānanda does also apply the principle of appropriateness to the feature of "literary texture" (*saṅghaṭanā*) independent of *rasa* (*DhĀ*, 3.6K; 1940: 310–18), it is clearly an exceptional case as "texture" is an anomalous category inherited from an older poetics (McCrea 1998: 288–300). *Rasa* as a work's telos, on the other hand, required a regulatory principle such as appropriateness to govern the elements subordinate to it. Much work has yet to be done on the genealogy and role of propriety in Sanskrit poetics; for now, there is still Raghavan 1942.

[11] *tatra vibhāvaucityaṃ tāvat prasiddham. bhāvaucityaṃ tu prakṛtyaucityāt. prakṛtir hy uttamamadhyamādhamabhāvena divyamānuṣādibhāvena ca vibhedinī* (*DhĀ*, 3.10–14V; 1940: 330.1–3).

[12] *tathā hy adhamaprakṛtyaucityenottamaprakṛteḥ śṛṅgāropanibandhane kā bhaven nopahāsyatā.... bhāratavarṣaviṣaye yathottamanāyakeṣu rājādiṣu śṛṅgāropanibandhasthā divyāśrayo 'pi śobhate* (*DhĀ*, 3.10–14V; 1940: 332.4–5, 7–8).

[13] *tenopāyakrameṇa pravṛttasya siddhir anupāyadvāreṇa pravṛttasya nāśa ity evaṃ nāyakapratināyakagatatvenārthānarthopāyavyutpattiḥ kāryā. upāyaś ca kartrāśrīyamāṇaḥ pañcāvasthā bhajate* (*L ad DhĀ*, 3.10–14; 1940: 337.3–5).

[14] *hṛdayānupraveśaś ca rasāsvādamaya eva. sa ca rasaś caturvargopāyavyutpattinā-ntarīyakavibhāvādisaṃyogaprasādopanata iti evaṃ rasocitavibhāvādyupanibandhe rasāsvādavaivaśyam eva svarasabhāvinyāṃ vyutpattau prayojakam iti prītir eva vyutpatteḥ prayojikā* (*L ad DhĀ*, 3.10–14; 1940: 336.6–9).

[15] *śṛṅgārarasāṅgair unmukhīkṛtāḥ santo hi vineyāḥ sukhaṃ vinayopadeśān gṛhṇanti.*

sadācāropadeśarūpā hi nāṭakādigoṣṭhī vineyajanahitārtham eva munibhir avatāritā (*DhĀ*, 3.30V; 1940: 398–99.3–1).

[16] Similar examples could be cited, for instance, with reference to Ānanda's analysis of the suggestion of *śānta-rasa* and the "life aims" or *puruṣārtha*s in works of literature such as the *Mahābhārata* (*DhĀ*, 4.5V; 1940: 530ff.). One might also note that the second suggestor that Ānanda discusses on the level of the work as a whole is, like the first one discussed above, motivated by a desire to ensure the proper social representation of characters. Received plots are to be revised and innovated on as would be appropriate to the *rasa* they are to reveal (*DhĀ*, 3.10–14V; 1940: 335–36). Although he is not explicit, Ānanda's mention of Kālidāsa in this context immediately brings to mind the latter's invention of the ring of recognition in order to save his hero, a character of the highest type, the noble king Duṣyanta, from the cruelty associated with the lowest type of character.

[17] "The commentators on Ānanda will, of course, contextualize the poem, albeit without explaining why it is necessary, let alone reasoning through the process of contextualization. And that this is indeed a matter in need of rationalization becomes evident when we observe the social complexities, and sometimes confusions, of the interpretations themselves. . . . It would certainly be astonishing if the celebrated commentator [Abhinavagupta] failed to grasp, or did not care to show he wholly grasped, the point of the first illustration of the central matter of the book he is setting out to explain. Evidently the 'richer language' called for above is necessary not only for outsider readers such as ourselves" (Pollock 2001: 203, 206–7).

[18] *bhama dhammia vīsaddho so suṇaho ajja mārio teṇa / golāaḍaviaḍakuḍaṅgavāsiṇā dariasīheṇa*. Sanskrit *chāyā*: *bhrama dhārmika viśrabdhaḥ sa śunako 'dya māritas tena / godāvarītaṭavikaṭakuñjavāsinā daryasiṃhena*. My translation follows Ingalls' in the main (Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan 1990: 83).

[19] Given the limited scope of this essay, I am bracketing Abhinava's well-known views on topics such as the moral edification (*vyutpatti*) one receives from literature (e.g., 1940; 1992: 183.5–6, 281.12–18, 283.14), the life aims addressed by literature's sentiments (1992: 276.1–4, 327.8ff.), and so on. See also Bansat-Boudon 1992: 104ff.; and Gerow 1994.

[20] "The psychological and axiological difficulties that bothered Abhinava—when precisely do we realize that our aesthetic experience is only a semblance, a shadow of the real thing, and what precisely are we feeling before we come to the real thing, and what precisely are we feeling before we come to that realization?—arise only when *rasābhāsa* is held to be in essence a reception event. He offers an interesting solution: "The *ābhāsatva*, the impropriety, of [our] experiences is something we realize only later; during the actual experience we are absorbed,' whereby, accordingly, the aesthetic experience of *rasābhāsa* itself becomes a semblance, a *carvaṇābhāsa*, specious relishing. But this, I believe, is a solution to a problem of his own making" (Pollock 2001: 210–11). While we have no information as to when,

prior to Abhinava, *rasābhāsa* was recognized as a problem, it may have constituted one since Rudraṭa's poetics, which appears to have been the first to reconceive *rasa* in *alaṃkāraśāstra* as a reception event.

[21] *atra raudraprakṛtīnām anucitas trāso bhagavatprabhāvakāraṇakṛta iti bhāvābhāsaḥ* (*L ad DhĀ*, 2.5; 1940: 200.4). See *NŚ*, 6.63; 1992: 316.2–3): *yac ca kiñcit samārabhante svabhāvaceṣṭitaṃ vāgaṅgādikaṃ tat sarvaṃ raudram evaiteṣām. śṛṅgāraś ca taiḥ prāyaśaḥ prasabhaṃ sevyate.*

[22] Udbhaṭa's definition is *anaucityapravṛttānāṃ kāmakrodhādikāraṇāt | bhāvānāṃ ca rasānāṃ ca bandha ūrjasvi kathyate ||* (KĀSS, 4.5; 1982: 54). Indurāja's relevant gloss is *tatra hi rāgadveṣamohakāraṇakā anaucityena rasabhāvā upanibadhyate* (*LV ad* KĀSS, 4.5; 1982: 54.19–20).

[23] Read the variant, *abhilāṣo*, for the text's *abhimāno* on the basis of the corresponding passage in the *Locana* (*L ad DhĀ*, 2.3; 1940: 178.7–10).

[24] Commenting on the parallel passage in the *Locana*, Rāmaṣāraka interprets *anupayogī* in the context of the transitory emotion, desire: Rāvaṇa's certainty is "not suitable to generate the (transitory emotion), desire" (*abhilāṣajanane, 'nupayogī*) (*BP ad L ad DhĀ*, 2.3; 1940: 178.19). Given the reason that follows, I am inclined to understand it in the context of *arthakriyā* in its epistemological sense: Rāvaṇa's perception of Sītā as being in love with him is mistaken and can therefore serve no practical purpose.

[25] *kāmanābhilāṣamātrarūpā hi ratir atra vyabhicāribhāvo, na sthāyī. tasya sa tu sthāyikalpatvenābhāti. tadvaśād vibhāvādyābhāsatā, ataś ca sthāyyābhāsatvaṃ rateḥ, yato Rāvaṇasya Sītā dviṣṭā mayy upakṣepikā veti hṛdayaṃ naiva spṛśatīti. tatsparśe hy abhilāṣo 'syāpi līyetaiva. mayīyam anurakteti tu niścayo hy anupayogī, kāmajamohasāratvāt. śuktau rūpābhāsavat* (*ABh ad NŚ*, 6.40;, 1992: 289.11–15).

[26] See *L ad DhĀ*, 1.4; 1940: 78.13–79.2: *yady api tatra hāsyarasarūpataiva, 'śṛṅgārāddhi bhaveddhāsya' iti vacanāt, tathāpi pāścātyeyaṃ sāmājikānāṃ sthitis, tanmayībhavanadaśāyāṃ tu rater evāsvādyateti śṛṅgārataiva bhāti paurvāparyavivekāvadhīraṇena 'dūrākarṣaṇamohamantra iva me tannāmni yāte śrutim' ityādau* and Rāmaṣāraka's gloss: *vibhāvaratyādyor yat paurvāparyaṃ tadvivekasyāvadhīraṇenābhāvena ... atrādau sahṛdayānāṃ SītāviṣayakaRāvaṇarates tanmayībhāvenāsvādyateti śṛṅgāracarvaṇaiva* (*BP ad L ad DhĀ*, 1.4; 1940: 79.2–3, 4–5). Abhinava's language here usefully shows how the audience's false aesthesis is directly dependent on the character's miscognition: it is in identifying with his state of mind that the spectators will temporarily bracket their knowledge of its incongruity with its object and pseudocause, Sītā. The audience's response accurately apprehends the character's awareness—as Krishnamoorthy says, "From the point of view of Rāvaṇa it is *śṛṅgāra* [technically *rati*] all right" (1964: 120)—but because Rāvaṇa is mistaken, it becomes a specious aesthetic experience. Thus, *rasābhāsa* doesn't raise the issue of erroneous cognition that Abhinava dispenses with elsewhere, which concerns an actor's being mistaken for the character represented (*ABh ad NŚ*, 6.31;

1992: 268.25ff.). For relevant accounts of identification and sympathetic response, see *L ad DhĀ*, 1.18; 1940: 255.7–57.2) and subcommentary.

[27] *evaṃ tadābhāsatāyāḥ prakāraḥ śṛṅgāreṇa sūcitaḥ. tena karuṇādyābhāseṣv api hāsyatvaṃ sarveṣu mantavyam* (*ABh ad NŚ*, 6.40; 1992: 290.4–5) and *etac [tadābhāsatvaṃ] ca śṛṅgārānukṛtiśabdaṃ prayuñjāno munir api sūcitavān. anukṛtir amukhyatābhāsa iti hy eko 'rthaḥ* (*L ad DhĀ*, 2.3; 1940: 178.10–79.1).

[28] The former identification may also have been prompted by another consideration. Bharata breaks down the traditional eight *rasa*s into four pairs, stating that in each pair one of the *rasa*s give rise to the other. In only one of these pairs will the imitation, rather than the activity, of a *rasa*—namely, the erotic (*śṛṅgāra*)—give rise to the other, that is, humor (*hāsya*) (*NŚ*, 6.40–41; 1992: 289–91). But, as Bhoja will argue, the imitation of other *rasa*s will also give rise to the sentiment of humor (see Pollock 1998: 177). Hence, Abhinava's metaphorical identification of the erotic with all *rasa*s may also have been intended to forestall such an objection. The second identification—that of imitation with false semblance—is a reasonable gloss, but its causal linkage of *rasābhāsa* with humor goes beyond anything in Udbhaṭa's definition that could sanction it.

[29] I translate according to the subcommentary: *dūrākarṣaṇaṃ mohaś ca tatkārī yo mantraḥ tasmin* (*BP ad L ad DhĀ*, 2.3; 1940: 178.6–7).

[30] *yady api dūrākarṣaṇamohamantra iva me tannāmni yāte śrutiṃ* (*cetaḥ kālakalām api prasahate nāvasthitiṃ tāṃ vinā . . .*) *ityādau Rāvaṇakāvye tāvati ratyābhāsataiva. na tu hāsaḥ sphurati. tathāpi Sītāvibhāvavilakṣaṇaṃ Rāvaṇavacaḥ prakṛtiviruddhaṃ ca cintādainyamohādikavyabhicāriganaṃ aśrupātaparidevitādyanubhāvajātam anaucityāt tadābhāsarūpaṃ saddhāsyavibhāvarūpam* (*ABh ad NŚ*, 6.40; 1992: 289.15–290.4) Here I have followed the edited text of 1996: 111.5–112.3, with the additional emendation of *kāvye* for *vākye* on the basis of the *Locana* (*L ad DhĀ*, 2.3; 1940: 178.1) and of *paridevitādyanubhāva-* for *paridevitādi cānubhāva-*. *tadābhāsarūpam* = *śṛṅgārābhāsarūpam*. While Dvivedi's Hindi translation, "*ratyābhās hokar*" (1996: 112) is intuitive given the mention of *ratyābhāsataiva* above, I believe the real referent must be the *śṛṅgārābhāsa* that was mentioned just before Abhinava introduced this example—and where it is said to be the result of the audience's specious savoring of the false appearances of all of the factors (causes, symptoms, etc.) listed here: *yato vibhāvābhāsād anubhāvābhāsād vyabhicāryābhāsād ratyābhāse pratīte carvaṇābhāsasāraḥ śṛṅgārābhāsaḥ* (*ABh ad NŚ*, 6.40; 1992: 289.10–11). Abhinava's formulation in the *Locana* would seem to support such a reading: *yadā tu vibhāvābhāsād ratyābhāsodayas tadā vibhāvānubhāsāc carvaṇābhāsa iti rasābhāsasya viṣayaḥ. yathā Rāvaṇakāvyākarṇane śṛṅgārābhāsaḥ* (*L ad DhĀ*, 2.3; 1940: 177.12–178.2).

[31] Since Abhinava's learned editor and translator, Daniel Ingalls, appears to have understood this point differently in the context of the *Locana*, I would like to explain my understanding of it below. Ingalls states, "If one guides one's criticism strictly

by the words of Bharata (*BhNŚ* I, p. 295) such false love should lead to comedy. In fact, says Abhinava, it may lead to comedy only at a time long after our experience." (Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan 1990: 37, cited in Pollock 2001: 209). My own view is that Abhinava's purpose in that passage in the *Locana* is in part to clarify Bharata's awkward identification of cause and effect and not to greatly delay the sentiment of humor: "Even if the sage has determined that 'that, on the other hand, which is the imitation of the erotic [i.e., a cause], is the sentiment of humor [i.e., that cause's effect],' nevertheless [that cause, namely, the imitation of the erotic] will become [its effect], the sentiment of humor, at a later point." *yady api 'śṛṅgārānukṛtir yā tu sa hāsya' iti muninā nirūpitaṃ tathāpy auttarakālikaṃ tatra hāsyarasatvam* (*L ad DhĀ*, 2.3; Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, and Rāmaṣāraka 1940: 178.2–3). Thus, "such false love" does lead to comedy because it is a (kind of) *rasa*; it is *bhāvābhāsa* that doesn't, until it is enjoyed as *rasābhāsa*. See also Krishnamoorthy 1964: 119–21.

32 Rāmaṣāraka helpfully elucidates: *śṛṅgāracarvaṇaiva, paścāt tadrater anucitālambanakatvajñānena tadviṣayakahāsodbodhāddhāsyacarvaṇā* (*BP ad L ad DhĀ*, 1.4; 1940: 79.4–5).

33 *tena karuṇādyābhāseṣv api hāsyatvaṃ sarveṣu mantavyam. anaucityapravṛttikṛtam eva hi hāsyavibhāvatvam* (*ABh ad NŚ*, 6.40; 1992: 290.5–6).

34 *prahasanarūpakeṇānaucityatyāgaḥ sarvapuruṣārtheṣu vyutpādyaḥ* (*ABh ad NŚ*, 6.40; 1992: 290.9–10).

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PART FIVE

Early Modernity

13

The End of the Ends of Man?

Parimal G. Patil

That Sanskrit knowledge-systems have histories is something that Sheldon Pollock has shown decisively.[1] In his now famous essays, "The New Intellectuals in Seventeenth-Century India" and "The Death of Sanskrit," and 2004 Gonda lecture, *The Ends of Man at the End of Premodernity*, Pollock outlines in an unprecedented way when and where a number of these knowledge-systems developed, flourished, reinvented themselves, and died.[2] Pollock also very carefully notes the limitations of his own analysis by reminding us how little we know, even about the disciplines that he has studied, and cautioning us to keep in mind that other knowledge-systems may have histories that are different than these.[3] His work thus invites us to reconsider his own analysis as we learn more about the intellectual history of Sanskrit, especially now that he has shown us where, and how, to look. In this essay, I want to honor this invitation by focusing on the history of the "Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika" knowledge-system from 1750 to 1900.[4] This history is particularly relevant to Pollock's work since it provides us with a new perspective from which to consider some of his conclusions regarding the end of the ends of man. Before turning to my understanding of this history, however, a brief review of Pollock's account may be helpful, as a way of establishing a baseline interpretation with which to compare my discussion of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika "data."[5]

1. The New Life and Times of Sanskrit Knowledge-Systems

In *The Ends of Man at the End of Premodernity*, Pollock argues that in the "late premodern" and "early modern" period, roughly 1550–1750, there are two discernible moments of particular historical significance: a moment of "reformation" or "renewal" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that he argues is new and "progressive"; and a moment of "counterreformation" in the eighteenth century that he says is also new, but "regressive."[6] The latter half of this eighteenth-century moment is said to mark a "fissure" or "historical rupture" in the history of Sanskrit knowledge-systems that has proven to be

"too deep to allow the creative tradition to ever [re]constitute itself."[7] It is this deep fissure and historical rupture that Pollock argues marks the "death of Sanskrit."[8] For Pollock, what is surprising and most in need of explanation, however, is not the moment of renewal, but the eighteenth-century moment of counterreformation, during which "knowledge forms concerning the ends of man [and, by implication, all knowledge-systems] effectively ended."[9] We are told that the history of a knowledge-system "ends" when it ceases to be "creatively cultivated" and fails to generate any further "significant contributions," as measured by textual production, "intellectual substance," and/or "disciplinary influence," itself indicated by "the circulation of works."[10] This eighteenth-century moment is further characterized by what Pollock says is "a repudiation of the [new intellectuals]" (*navya*-s) and an assertion of "a kind of neo-traditionalism" that, he suggests, somehow "arrested [the knowledge-systems'] capacity for development, by cordoning [them] off from the kind of critique that had once supplied [their] life force."[11] Pollock also emphasizes that the intellectual audacity, independence, and innovativeness of the new intellectuals in the seventeenth (and early eighteenth) century was *very quickly* met with this "reassertion . . . of orthodoxy" and unmistakable "rejection" in the second half of the eighteenth century.[12] The temporal, if not causal, consequence of this new but "regressive" moment is supposed to be the historical rupture referred to above. Pollock's account of the later history of Sanskrit knowledge-systems is based on three methodological or evidentiary intuitions: (1) that the statistics of textual production and distribution of texts, both spatially and temporally, is important for determining the health of a knowledge-system; (2) that attention to textual genres, the intellectual projects exemplified by them, and text-internal understandings of their intellectual contexts are also of historical significance; and (3) that specific arguments from specific texts can be paradigmatic of broader historical realities. It is also worth noting that this set of intuitions begins with the outermost facts about texts—that they exist, were produced by a particular person in a particular place, and were in circulation for such and such a time and in such and such places—and then moves to general facts about the insides of these texts—that they are of such a genre and organized in a particular way, according to such and such a scheme—and finally to very detailed and selective facts about specific passages in specific texts. The inverse relationship between the relative interiority of Pollock's data and their transparency is acknowledged but not discussed in any detail. As is clear from Pollock's analysis, however, facts about textual production and distribution are much easier to confirm and assess than those about the epistemic or historical significance of genre and

the exemplary nature of very specific (and often very technical) arguments.

When compared with this baseline picture of Sanskrit knowledge-systems in "late premodernity" and "early modernity," the history of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system looks rather different, even if one accepts the evidentiary intuitions that Pollock uses to support his account. More specifically, in the history of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system, the moment of "renewal" that Pollock argues took place in the sixteenth or seventeenth century seems to have occurred in two distinct phases centuries earlier: an eleventh- and twelfth-century phase of *creation*, initiated by the works of Udayana; and a fourteenth- and fifteenth-century phase of *re-creation* initiated by the work of Gaṅgeśa.[13] Moreover, while the eighteenth-century moment that Pollock refers to as a "counterreformation" marks a moment of change and *transformation* in the *textual* history of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system, identifying this moment with the death of the system—even as understood by Pollock—may be premature. It is this latter claim that I hope to defend in this essay.

2. Counterreformation (1750–1800)

Pollock's argument for an eighteenth-century counterreformation is based on his idea that the novelty of the new intellectuals and their work was quietly constrained by an inherent traditionalism from which even they could not completely free themselves. This traditionalism is reflected not in the new and "progressive" features of their work—their new level of historical consciousness, revaluation of novelty and innovation, and change in style and mode of argument—but in what Pollock refers to as the "problematics themselves," by which he means a seeming epistemic continuity in the questions that are discussed, the conclusions that are defended, and the sources that are cited in support of them.[14] As Pollock puts it, there was "persistence of the old among the new" and, more specifically, "a newness of intellect, but an oldness of will," which, he says, point to the inherent traditionalism and orthodoxy that "inexplicably" reasserted itself in the latter half of the eighteenth century and kept the innovations of the new intellectuals in check.[15] My argument against this analysis and timetable is based on both a reexamination of Pollock's arguments and examples and a positive argument of my own, which suggests that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system had a history long after its supposed death.

In support of his argument for the "persistence of the old among the new" and the counterreformation that followed from it, Pollock cites a series of examples to show that much of what appears to be "new" is in fact just a

"recapitulation of a very old position."[16] I want to very briefly examine just one of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika-related examples to which Pollock refers, only to confirm his warning that it is very difficult to discover what is really new or, I will add, a return to something old, without knowing *everything* that came before.[17]

Pollock dismisses the "new" in Gadādhara's mid- to late-seventeenth-century *Navamuktivāda*, by arguing that it "derives from" Gaṅgeśa's fourteenth-century *Īśvarānumāna* and stands in sharp contrast to Gadādhara's innovative thinking on other topics. A closer look at the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika discussion of *mukti*, however, suggests otherwise. Consider the charge of not being innovative. In support of his point, Pollock cites Kālīpada Tarkācārya (one of Ingalls's teachers), who makes a similar point in his Sanskrit introduction to his 1959 edition of Gadādhara's text. What Kālīpada did not know, however, is that roughly three generations earlier, Rāmabhadra Sarvabhauma (ca. 1525–75) composed his own *Mokṣavāda*, in which he defended the view that one experiences joy in liberation (*ānandamokṣavāda*), for the first time, it seems, in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, since Bhāsarvajña's ninth- or tenth-century *Nyāyabhūṣaṇa*.[18] Both Gadādhara, in his *Navamuktivāda*, and his teacher Harirāma Tarkavāgīśa in his own *Muktivādavicāra*, reject this view in a way that strongly suggests that they were responding to Rāmabhadra. To defend an old view against a new opponent and with new arguments seems to me to be innovative and of historical significance. Moreover, to dismiss the "new" in Gadādhara's work by claiming that it "derives from" Gaṅgeśa's *Īśvarānumāna* is to mask the fact that Gadādhara's text is nothing like Gaṅgeśa's, either in its form or its specific content, and was hardly motivated by it. Moreover, both Gadādhara and Harirāma defend a novel interpretation of *mukti* that is based on a different understanding of the old idea that *tattvajñāna* (knowledge of reality) is a cause of liberation.[19] It may be worth noting that the position defended by Rāmabhadra was taken up again by the great twentieth-century Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika intellectual, Badrinātha Śukla, who, in his *Śataślokī*, takes up a version of the *ānandamokṣavāda* position.[20]

The strength of Pollock's argument that a counterreformation occurred in the latter half of the eighteenth century is based on the analysis of a series of such examples that depends on how one determines when something is really new, innovative, and progressive, or old, invariant, and regressive. Central to Pollock's argument is thus an implicit evaluative criterion. My analysis of Pollock's "Gadādhara example" is simply meant to reinforce his warning that given how little we know about Sanskrit knowledge-systems in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is very difficult to identify what is really new or

old. That is, even given explicit criteria, a great deal of detailed work needs to be done before one can determine that they in fact apply in a particular case.

One difference between my analysis of Pollock's other Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika-related examples and his own has to do with the evaluative criteria referred to above and, more specifically, with different intuitions about what counts as historically significant.[21] For Pollock, it appears as though philosophical arguments on inherited topics that go beyond a certain level of abstraction and technical detail are not of historical significance—or at least not of the kind of historical significance that Pollock is interested in or takes to be relevant to the history of Sanskrit knowledge-systems. Where Pollock sees redundancy, invariance, and historically insignificant differences, however, I see deep and sustained commitment to fundamental philosophical questions, astonishing attention to detail and variation in technique, and undeniable innovation.[22] Pollock suggests that even if my observations are correct, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika intellectuals of this period were still not history makers since, in the words of Randall Collins, whom Pollock cites with approval, they became "institutionally-protected specialist[s] in esoteric disciplinary abstractions," both "technically rigorous, and remote from the clear political and religious appeals of the lay-based philosophers whom they now displace."[23] In my view, however, not only is it not clear why the making of such "remote" intellectual history and history of philosophy is not *historically* significant but it is also far from obvious that Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika intellectuals were even "remote" in the manner suggested by Collins.[24]

My point is simply that the success of Pollock's examples, and therefore his argument, depends on both a detailed analysis of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century texts, which to my knowledge has not yet been done, and an articulation and defense of his criteria for "historical significance." On the basis of his examples, then, it is not clear to me that a counterreformation occurred around the end of the eighteenth century, at least in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system. On the basis of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika texts produced in this period, however, it does seem that a historically significant change occurred in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, though exactly what kind of change this was and how we should understand its significance is very much an open question. As a way of briefly considering this question, I would like to return to Pollock's three evidentiary intuitions and apply them to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system in the century following its supposed death.

3. Transformation (1750–1850/1900)

Recall that Pollock's analysis of the historical rhythm of Sanskrit knowledge-systems is based on three evidentiary intuitions that have to do with the historical significance of textual production and circulation, the rise to prominence of specific textual genres and the intellectual projects exemplified by them, and paradigmatic arguments from paradigmatic texts. Applying these evidentiary intuitions to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system in the period 1750–1850/1900 suggests a "third phase" in its history that makes its death shortly after 1750 seem premature.

Pollock's conclusion that by 1800 "textual production *of the sort* that had marked the history of these disciplines prior to the 19th century came to an end" seems to apply to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system.[25] There is a historically significant decrease in textual production and diversity in the texts produced in 1750–1850/1900, and a relative absence of "new" and independent texts, and certainly none that themselves became canonized.[26] In this very limited sense, the knowledge-system does not seem to "recreat[e] itself" in this period, and thus seems to satisfy one of the criteria that Pollock argues marks the death of a knowledge-system. The problem, however, is that this criterion presupposes a rather limited notion of what it means for a knowledge-system to "live" and, in my view, is far too weak to warrant an inference to its death. That this might be so in the case of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system is clear from looking at the texts that were in fact produced in this era of the "living dead."

During this period in the history of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system, numerous texts were produced, even if their numbers do not match the number of texts produced in the preceding century. There were short monographs or extended essays on selected topics discussed in the *Tattvacintāmaṇi* (*vāda*-texts);[27] commentaries and subcommentaries on classic Nyāya texts; commentaries on independent manuals of the knowledge-system; a proliferation, for the first time, of short critical essays in which selected subtopics, usually based on the work of Gadādhara and/or Jagadīśa, are discussed (*kroḍapatra*-s), usually for the benefit of specialists;[28] new anti-Vedānta polemical treatises, for example, Kṛṣṇambhaṭṭa Arde's (ca. 1800) *Candrikāvilāsa*—a refutation of Mādhava's *Mitabhāṣiṇī*;[29] Bacchā Jhā's (ca. 1910) *Gūḍārthatattvāloka*, a critical commentary on Madhusūdana's commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*;[30] and Rākhaladāsa Nyāyaratna Bhaṭṭācārya's (ca. 1829–1914) pair of "Advaitakhaṇḍana" texts—the *Advaita(vāda) khaṇḍana* and *Advaitavādakhaṇḍanapariśiṣṭa*—and his *Māyāvādanirāsa*. It is

worth noting that Rākhaladāsa wrote over a dozen texts, including one on the fourth end of man, the *Muktivicāra*, which is one of nearly half a dozen such texts produced in this period.[31] What is striking about this pattern of textual production is that it continued well into the twentieth century.[32]

The intellectual work done by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika intellectuals in the period I have just discussed suggests to me that the knowledge-system was not dead, even if there was a decline in the number of texts produced. The kinds of texts that were produced were remarkably similar to those produced in the preceding century, as was their quality. Moreover, based on an initial survey of manuscript catalogs it is clear that many of these texts did circulate, and given that some were even published within a decade or two of their composition, they may have circulated over greater distances and in greater numbers than many earlier manuscripts.

Even if one disagrees with me and insists that Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika textual production after 1750 was more dead than alive, it is worth asking a more basic question as to why some notion of statistically significant textual production of a certain sort is allowed to be the only relevant sign of "historically significant" life for a knowledge-system.[33] As I hope to show, the history of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system between 1750 and 1900 suggests that there are alternatives. Even if the historically significant textual history of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system is taken to have come to an end, it should be clear that Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika intellectuals did not. It is worth inquiring, therefore, into what they were doing, if in fact they were not producing historically significant texts, either in sufficient numbers or of sufficient quality, as Pollock sometimes suggests. From my perspective, there are at least three alternative signs of life that we need to consider in thinking about the later history of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system.[34]

First, well into the nineteenth century traditional forms of Sanskrit learning continued in traditional-style institutions. I will cite just two examples. In 1891, the great Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika intellectual Bacchā Jhā (1860–1918) was running a *ṭol* in Nowani, near Mithila, where he was teaching nineteen students studying six different subjects. He died in 1918 while serving as the principal of the Muzaffarpur Sanskrit College. He himself was educated by his maternal uncle, Viśvanātha Jhā, who was running his own *ṭol* of eight students in the 1890s in Mithilā (Ṭhaḍhī). His other teachers include, Jaṭādhara Jhā and Babujana Jhā of Pilokhwar and Bāla Śāstrī and Viśuddhānanda Sarasvatī of Benares.[35] If we add to this list the teachers of his maternal uncle, the number of active Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika teachers in the mid–nineteenth century who are associated with just these two men is almost a dozen. It is also worth noting that each of these

men produced Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika works. Viśvanātha's works include a *pattrikā* called the *Siddhāntasāra* on the *Vyadhikaraṇa-vāda* of the *Tattvacintāmaṇi* and a very lengthy commentary on Udayana's *Lakṣaṇāvali* (which was printed in 1900). His nephew Bacchā Jhā's works include learned *kroḍapatras* on the work of Jagadīśa, a commentary on Śriharṣa's *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya* and on classic texts such as the *Nyāyabhāṣya*, *Tātparyaṭīkā*, and Vardhamāna's *Nyāyakusumāñjalīprakāśa*.[36]

More generally, according to William Adam's three surveys of education in Bengal in the 1830s, in Nadia alone there were 25 "traditional" Sanskrit schools, in which between five to six hundred students studied. In Nattor, Rajashahi district, Adams counts 39 such *ṭols*.[37] Unfortunately Adams does not go into detail as to the curriculum or the identity of the students and teachers in these various institutions. It is certain, however, that Rākhaladāsa Nyāyaratna Bhaṭṭācārya (ca. 1840–1914), who I mentioned above, was running such a *ṭol* about twenty miles outside of Calcutta in the 1860s.[38] It is also worth noting that a similar survey conducted in Benares in 1849 lists 193 Sanskrit schools.[39]

Second, in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there came to be new contexts for Sanskrit textual production and new genres in which Sanskrit intellectuals produced their work. Benares Sanskrit college (*kāśīstharājakīyapāṭhaśālā*), for example, which is now a part of Sampūrṇānanda Sanskrit University, was established in 1791, soon followed by the Calcutta Government Sanskrit College in 1824, which began with fifty-five students and eight faculty. It is worth noting that printing presses had already been established in and around Calcutta by this time. Sanskrit journals such as the *Pandit* (*Kāśīvidyāsudhānidhi*) were also established in Benares within a few decades. Early issues of the *Pandit*—the initial circulation of which was 250 copies, half of which were for export—carried editions of texts, Sanskrit *bhūmikā*'s—in which the contents of the texts were summarized—and some original Sanskrit works. A short-lived (thirty-year) Sanskrit College in Poona—which eventually became Deccan College—was founded in 1821 with eighty-five students and thirteen faculty members.[40]

In the mid- to late 1800s numerous Sanskrit series were also established, including the Anandashrama Sanskrit Series in 1880 (Poona); Benares Sanskrit series in 1880 (Benares); Bibliotheca Indica in 1849 (Calcutta); Bombay Sanskrit and Prakrit Series (Bombay) in 1868; Caukhambha Saṃskṛta Granthāmāla in 1898 (Benares); Government Oriental Library Series, Biblioteca Sanskrita, in 1893 (Mysore); Kāvyamālā in 1886 (Bombay); Madras Sanskrit Series in 1898 (Madras); R. S. Vadhyar and Sons in 1894 (Kalapathy); Sri Venkateswar Steam Press in 1871 (Bombay); and Vizianagaram Sanskrit Series in 1890.

Needless to say, there are others as well.

Both the new Sanskrit Colleges and the publication venues listed above created contexts for new kinds of textual production and intellectual work. For example, from 1850 to 1900 alone, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika intellectuals produced over a dozen editions of commentaries and subcommentaries on sections of just the *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, many of which contained lengthy and learned Sanskrit introductions and/or annotations by the editors. In addition to such well-known "historical" commentaries, numerous Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika texts by contemporary Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika intellectuals were also published in Mysore, Pune, Benares, and Calcutta in the latter half of the nineteenth century. For example, Raghunātha Parvate Śāstrin's (fl. 1853) *Nyāyaratna* on *Gadādharī* was published in Mysore in 1893, Maheśacandra Nyāyaratna's (fl. 1860) *Ṭippaṇa* to *Nyāyakusumāñjalivyākhyā* was published in Calcutta in 1864, Tārānātha Tarkavācaspati's (fl. 1865) *Śabdārtharatna* was published in Calcutta in 1851 and his *Tarkaratnākara* in Benares in 1868, and Jīvānanda Vidyāsāgara's *Vādārtha* on Jagadīśa was published in Calcutta in 1897. From the few records that we have of the curriculum at a variety of educational institutions, we know that many of these texts were actively studied. More generally still, according to Robert Darnton's study of book production in British India from 1850 to 1900, in 1898 alone there were a total 342 works printed in "Indian classical languages," mostly Sanskrit, in Madras, Bombay, Bengal, and the Northwestern Provinces and Oudh.[41]

What these statistics suggest is that in addition to the composition of the kinds of works listed here—which in my view are themselves historically significant—there were also historically significant levels of what may be called "editorial activity" on the part of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika intellectuals after 1850, which suggests—at least to me—that such intellectuals were engaged in new kinds of intellectual work as Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika intellectuals that were occasioned by the creation of new academic institutions (with new kinds of academic expectations) and the transition to print culture.[42] As far as I can tell this is a pattern that also continued into the twentieth century.

Third, in addition to the work of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika intellectuals themselves and the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika texts that they produced, in genres both familiar and new, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system also seems to have been incorporated by Vedāntins into their own knowledge-systems, thus finding a home in educational contexts and institutions associated with a variety of religious intellectuals. The canonization of Vedānta texts by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika intellectuals, beginning with Śrīharṣa's twelfth-century *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya*, and the canonization of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika texts

by Vedāntins, beginning with the works of Śrīdhara and Udayana, point to the complex, long-standing, and important relationship between these two knowledge-systems.[43] Interestingly, this relationship seems to have changed by the sixteenth century, when it appears as though the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system increasingly became, for many Vedāntins, an intellectual discipline, in the sense that it became a part of the basic set of intellectual and disciplinary skills required of religious intellectuals, and thus for many came to have primarily "instrumental" rather than "final" value. This shift from "knowledge-system" to "intellectual discipline" appears to have been a part of a broader shift of the trivium to these intellectual and religious centers.[44] In these new contexts, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system was redeployed and reorganized in service of what, for lack of a better word, I will call a "theological" agenda.

Consider, for example, the works of two Viśiṣṭādvaita intellectuals, "Mysore" Anantācārya (fl. 1860) and Kṛṣṇa Tātācārya of Tirupati, (fl. 1871). Anantācārya wrote over thirty Viśiṣṭādvaita works, including a remarkable collection of nearly twenty *vāda*-texts, which engage the long-standing Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika tradition of writing short works based on various subsections of the *Tattvacintāmaṇi* or its commentaries.[45] One of these texts is Anantācārya's *Śatakoṭikhaṇḍana*, a critical response to Rāma Śāstrin's *Śatakoṭi* or *Satpratipakṣakroḍapatram* on Gadādhara's *Satpratipakṣa*. Anantācārya's text was critically responded to within a few decades by Sokatur Viraghavacharya (fl. 1890) in his *Śatakoṭikhaṇḍanamaṇḍanam*. These remarkable texts engage the problem of whether a system of inferential reasoning can accept two epistemically equivalent but incompatible inferential arguments. It is also worth noting that one of Anatācārya's contemporaries, T. E. S. Kuppan Aiyaṅgar, wrote four *Tātparyadīpīkā* commentaries on Anatācārya's texts in the late 1880s, thus suggesting an active, even if small, community of well-trained Viśiṣṭādvaita scholars.[46] Kṛṣṇa Tatacharya was also multidisciplinary individual who wrote over twenty works, including a series of *Kroḍapatra*s on the *Gadadharī*, his own response to Rāma Śāstri's *Śatakoṭi*, and four Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika *vāda*-texts, in addition to numerous *Viśiṣṭādvaita* works, including a commentary on Vedāntadeśika's *Nyāyasiddhāñjanam*, which was published in Conjeeverem in 1884, most probably within his lifetime.[47] Again, his works reveal a very serious engagement with Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika texts, techniques, and ideas that could only have come from years of serious study. If one were to add to these Viśiṣṭādvaita examples, examples from the long-standing and deep engagement with the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system by Advaitins, as early as Śrīharṣa, and Dvaitins, as early as Jayatīrtha and Vyāsatīrtha,

it appears undeniable that throughout the second millennium the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system found a second home.

Through these three alternative signs of life—teaching, new kinds of intellectual activity associated with new intellectual contexts, and the role of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika in theological education—I have tried to point to three additional contexts in which to search for the life of a knowledge-system. It is my view, however, that even by Pollock's criterion of historically significant textual production the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system was alive in the nineteenth century. If one takes into account the alternative signs of life that I have pointed to here, there is, in my view, no doubt that this is so.

4. Conclusion

What is at issue in my discussion of Pollock's analysis is the nature and significance of the "data" that I have described. It may be that I have misunderstood (and therefore misapplied) Pollock's criteria for historical and intellectual significance, and that the additional criteria that I have proposed are inadequate, and do not reveal what I suggest they do, or for that matter anything of historical significance. Conceptual questions regarding what should count as traditional, old, and regressive; innovative, new, and progressive; or historically and intellectually significant thus seem to me to be no less important for understanding the history of Sanskrit knowledge-systems than the detailed studies of the contexts and texts that generate the "what" that we may eventually choose to identify as "traditional," "innovative," or "significant." What remains an open question for me is exactly how Pollock determines what is in need of historical explanation and how we should evaluate the adequacy of his criteria and arguments for their applicability. It seems to me inevitable, however, that to fully understand what happened to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system, and the trivium more generally, we must look at the period 1750–1900 in great detail, and we must be sure not to exclude Vedānta.[48]

Notes

[1] The term *Sanskrit knowledge-systems* refers to a broad range of Sanskrit intellectual practices and/or disciplines. The eight knowledge-systems that are the focus of Pollock's Sanskrit Knowledge-Systems on the Eve of Colonialism Project (hereafter SKSEC) are *vyākaraṇa* (grammar), *mīmāṃsā* (hermeneutics), *nyāya* (logic/epistemology), *dharmaśāstra* (legal/moral sciences), *alaṃkāraśāstra* (poetics), *āyurveda* (medicine), *jyotiṣ* (astronomy), and *prayoga* (ritual science). For the purposes of this essay, I will add *vedānta* (theology/soteriology), *vaiśeṣika* (metaphysics), and the compound *nyāya-vaiśeṣika* knowledge-systems to Pollock's list. For a discussion of the SKSEC project, see Pollock 2002, 2004.

[2] Pollock 2001a, 2001b, 2005. Also see Pollock 2003, 2006. In his Gonda lectures, Pollock focuses on *kāvyaśāstra* ("the science of poetry," which takes the place of erotics or *kāmaśāstra*), *rājadharmanītiśāstra* ("the science of polity," which absorbs *arthaśāstra* ["the science of worldly gain"]), and *mīmāṃsā* (which takes the place of *dharmaśāstra*). For an account of his rationale for this, see Pollock 2005: 10–12. Interestingly, he does not consider a *śāstra* for the fourth end of man, *mokṣa*. While Pollock focuses his attention on these three "knowledge-systems" and "ends of man," it is clear from his work that he intends his conclusions to apply to knowledge-systems in general, not just those that attend to one of the ends of man discussed by him. It is light of this that I see my conclusions regarding the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system to be relevant to Pollock's analysis.

[3] Such a cautionary note can be found in each of the sources cited above. For additional details, see note 17.

[4] In my view, the "Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika" knowledge-system began its life in the collected works of Udayana, that is, early in the eleventh century. It was through Udayana's work—and more specifically his last work, the *Kiraṇāvalī*—that this compound knowledge-system was created. What made this moment of creation possible was an immediately preceding ninth- and tenth-century moment of "*resurrection*" in which, through the Nyāya works of Bhāsarvajña and Jayantabhaṭṭa (in Kashmir), and Vācaspatimiśra (from, it seems, Mithila), a Nyāya text tradition emerged out of the shadows cast by two great seventh-century Sanskrit intellectuals, the Mīmāṃsaka Kumārilabhaṭṭa and Buddhist epistemologist Dharmakīrti. This text tradition was then joined up with the Vaiśeṣika text tradition through Udayana's commentary on Praśastapāda's *Padārthadharmasaṃgraha*—a systematization and extension of Kaṇāda's *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*, the foundational text of the Vaiśeṣika text tradition—to create the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system. Udayana's work is at the center of this moment of renewal in the history of the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika text traditions and the virtually simultaneous moment of creation of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-system.

[5] See Ganeri, forthcoming and Preisendanz 2005 (both of which were written as a part of Pollock's SKSCE project) for two recent discussions of this "data." For earlier

work on the history of the Nyāya and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge-systems, see the excellent list of references in Preisendanz 2005.

[6] For his use of these terms see, for example, Pollock 2005: 79, 82. Also see Pollock 2001b: 26–31. According to Pollock, the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century moment of renewal is marked, in a variety of different locations and sociopolitical contexts, by the following five features: (1) an empirically and statistically significant "efflorescence" of writing, which was often innovative; (2) the rise to prominence of new textual "genres"; (3) the canonization of new texts; (4) a deliberate return on the part of Sanskrit intellectuals to the foundational texts of a knowledge-system and an undermining of the middlemen through whose work in the intervening centuries these source texts had been mediated; and the (5) cross- and multidisciplinarity of individuals. In his analysis of this moment of renewal, Pollock very carefully and deliberately localizes the individuals and texts about which he is writing and with equal care and deliberation avoids supposing that there is a causal connection between the history of place and the history of text. For a discussion of these "features," see Pollock 2005: 47, 48, 79, 80; 2002: 434.

[7] Pollock 2005: 18.

[8] For critical work on Pollock's argument for the "death of Sanskrit," see Hannender 2002; Kaviraj 2005; Hatcher 2005, 2007; and Bronner and Shulman 2006.

[9] Pollock 2005: 9.

[10] Ibid., 81–83.

[11] Ibid., 39.

[12] Ibid., 60. In this passage, Pollock is speaking specifically about *mīmāṃsā*, and the work of Dinakarabhaṭṭa.

[13] Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this essay to defend these claims here. For a partial defense, however, see Patil, forthcoming.

[14] See Pollock 2001b: 12, 14.

[15] See ibid., 18, 19. For Pollock, the eighteenth century is a historical moment in which the new and old coexist. As he says, "The new historicity and the awareness it seems to imply of the possibility of new truths are clearly in evidence, but remain securely anchored in a very old practice of thought, on an invariant set of questions." The universe of thought, he argues "did not expand in a way at all commensurate with the expansion of the instruments and styles of thought."

[16] Ibid., 14.

[17] The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika-related examples are (1) Raghunātha's "extreme" *navya*-style, (2) Kauṇḍa Bhaṭṭa's "periodization" of Gaṅgeśa in his *Padārthadīpikā*, (3) Mahādeva's discussion of *manas* in his *Nyāyakaustubha*, (4) Gāga Bhaṭṭa's discussion of *mukti* vis-à-vis the Naiyāyikas in his *Bhāṭṭacintāmaṇi*, and (5) Gadādhara's discussion of *mukti* in his *Navamuktivāda*. For examples 1–4, see ibid., 12–13. For

example 5, see page 14, note 19. It is worth noting that Pollock often repeats his warning about the difficulty of determining what is genuinely new and old. For example, he says (1) "As is the case with the other *śāstras* examined in the course of this monograph, it is no easy thing to determine what is new, whether in method or substance in the works of Kamalākara or Rājācūḍāmaṇi Dīkṣita, since the ability to securely identify an innovation presupposes familiarity with the entire antecedent history of the discipline" (2005: 19); and (2) "Change in strong traditions is typically marked not by open revolt but by reform so measured that it is often hard to perceive. What we noted in the case of *alaṃkāraśāstra* applies to *mīmāṃsā* as well. It is no easy task to identify innovation. To know that anything is new presupposes knowing everything that is old, but *mīmāṃsā* is a jungle and it is folly to assume that a late author is taking a path no one ever took before" (50). [For an interesting discussion of how the terms *new* and *old* are used in the work of Jagannātha, see Tubb and Bronner, 2008.]

[18] See the *Nyāyabhūṣaṇa* of Bhāsarvajña, 589–98. Although Rāmabhadra's text is supposed to have been edited and printed, I have not been able to obtain a copy of it. My remarks are based on Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, manuscript no. 460 of 1886–92, especially folios 3a and 3b.

[19] Their "novel" view is based on an understanding of *mukti* that is different from that found in Gaṅgeśa's *Tattvacintāmaṇi*. According to their view, *mukti* is the produced absence (*dhvaṃsābhāva*) of *durita/pāpa* rather than *duḥkha*. Compare, for example, Gaṅgeśa's discussion in his *Tattvacintāmaṇi* (vol. 2.2, 156ff.) with that of Harirāma in his *Muktivādavicāra* (28ff.) and Gadādhara in his *Navamuktivāda* (54–60). Such a view may also have been accepted by Raghunātha Śiromaṇi. See, for example, his very brief commentary on the relevant section of Udayana's *Ātmatattvaviveka* (628ff.).

[20] Incidentally, his novel (and shocking) *Dehātmavāda*, in which he argues that the *ātman* is reducible to the *manas* in association with a body, caused a stir when it was presented in 1985 at one of the last great gatherings of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika intellectuals in Benares. Interestingly, both works have led to secondary literature in English (see Krishna 2002) and Sanskrit (see Rājārāmaśukla 1996–97).

[21] Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this essay to go into these examples in any detail. For a more detailed discussion see Patil, forthcoming.

[22] In his review of Pollock 2006, David Shulman (2007) makes a similar point in relation to Pollock's arguments about *kāvya*.

[23] Pollock 2001: 31, n. 47, where he cites Collins 1998: 152, 158.

[24] See, for example, the works on "religious" topics by Raghunātha Śiromaṇi (*Kṛtisādhyatānumānavādavīciḥ*), Harirāma Bhaṭṭācārya (*Kāśīmaraṇakāraṇatāvādavīciḥ*), and Gadādhara Bhaṭṭācārya (*Svargavādavīciḥ* and *Viṣṇuprītivādavīciḥ*), not to mention the work on *Dharmaśāstra* produced by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika intellectuals, for which, see Derrett 1956, 1963, in which Gadādhara's work

on inheritance law (Kroll suggests that the text in question may not be Gadādhara's) and marriage is discussed. For more on this, see the essay by Kroll in this volume, especially his reference to Ward 1818. The *vāda*-s named in this note are all included in the *Vādavāridhiḥ*.

25 Pollock 2005: 9.

26 This is particularly evident if one compares the period from, roughly, 1600 to 1750 with the period from 1750 to 1900.

27 For a list of some of these, see Sarma 1985: 300–304, and the texts collected in the *Vādārthasaṃgraha*.

28 For an interesting list of these *kroḍapatra*-s, see Sarma 1985: 280–304. Also see Char 1997 and Char's discussion in Krishna 2002: 147–51, 188–208. Also see *Dākṣiṇātya Kroḍapatrasaṃgraha* and the *Kālīśaṅkarīya* and *Candranārāyaṇīya* on the *Hetvābhāsasāmānyanirukti* of Gadādhara. Lists of the other texts can be easily found in Potter's bibliography.

29 For a very brief discussion of some of Kṛṣṇambhaṭṭa Arde's work, see Krishna 2002: 173–78, which is based primarily on Sarma 1985: 61, 65, 69, 103, 122, 262, 270, 283. For more on Kṛṣṇambhaṭṭa Arde, see Kaviraj 1982: 112.

30 For a very brief discussion of some of Bacchā Jhā's work, see Krishna 2002: 163–66. Also see Sarma 1985: 62, 66, 245, 271. For more on Bacchā Jhā, see Bhattacharya 1987: 203–5 and the introduction to his commentary on the *Sāmānyanirukti* in Jhā 1935. Also see below.

31 Here is a list of Rākhaladāsa Nyāyaratna Bhaṭṭācārya's (ca. 1829–1914) work, compiled (primarily) on the basis of Potter's online bibliography of Indian philosophy: *Advaita(vāda)khaṇḍana*, *Advaitavādakhaṇḍanapariśiṣṭa*, *Gadādharanyūnatvavāda*, *Dīdhitikṛnnyūnatāvāda*, *Māyāvadanirāsa*, *Tattvasāra*, *Muktivicāra*, *Brahmavicāra*, *Paramāṇutattvanirūpaṇa*, *Sākāropāsana*, *Jīvatattvanirūpaṇa*, and *Prakāśa* on the *Śaktivādarahasya*.

32 This is evident from the lists of texts and authors in Potter's bibliography; Kaviraj 1982; Bhattacharya 1987; Sarma 1985; and Krishna 2002.

33 This point is also made in Shulman 2007.

34 There are others that I have not chosen to discuss, for example, the intellectual quality and significance of the texts produced.

35 Bhattacharya 1987: 201–3.

36 A partial list of Bachcha Jha/Dharmadatta's (ca. 1910) other work includes the *Gūḍārthatattvāloka*—a critical commentary on Madhusūdana's commentary on the *Gītā*; the *Gūḍārthatattvāloka*, commentary on Gadādhara Bhaṭṭācārya's *Vyutpattivāda*; and the *Gūḍārthatattvāloka*, commentary on Jagadīśa's *Siddhāntalakṣaṇa*.

37 See Adam's *Reports on Vernacular Education in Bengal and Behar, Submitted to*

Government in 1835, 1836, and 1838 (1835–38) in Basu 1941; Dharampal 1983; and Dibona 1983. Also see Dodson 2007.

[38] This is based on a handwritten note on the cover the Bengali script edition of his *Tattvasāra* in the Widener Library

[39] See Adam in the various sources cited in note 37. For insight into the lives of "pandits" in this period, see Hatcher 2005.

[40] Dodson 2007.

[41] Darnton 2001, 2002. For the production levels at a specific press, see Stark 2007. For an interesting discussion of Darnton 2002 that is relevant to Pollock's reliance on the statistics of textual production, see Joshi 2001.

[42] For more on this, see Dodson 2007.

[43] For earlier texts, see Vādivāgīśvara's *Mānamanohara* and the work of Udayana.

[44] Establishing that such a shift occurred, and understanding the nature of it, is something that really must be pursued. One straightforward way to pursue this would be to inquire into the history of Vedanta knowledge-systems, which was excluded from Pollock's seventeenth-century intellectuals project. The term *trivium* refers to what Pollock calls the "core components of *vyutpatti*, or Sanskrit education, . . . disciplines dealing with language, discourse, and logic (*śabda-, vākya-, pramāṇa-śastra*)" (2005: 9).

[45] For printed editions of Anantācārya's works, see Iyengar 1898–99; and Ananthachariar 1907, 1909, 1924.

[46] For printed editions of Aiyaṅgar's works, see Iyengar 1898–99.

[47] For a list of his works, consult Potter's online bibliography.

[48] For a related point, see Zimmerman, 2008.

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14

The Triumph of Reason: Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Sanskrit Discourse and the Application of Logic to Law

Ethan Kroll

This essay examines how certain early modern (seventeenth- and eighteenth-century) scholars writing in Sanskrit determined to move beyond two very famous, and, in certain ways, inconsistent, pronouncements on inheritance law, both seemingly based on a common body of inerrant Vedic doctrine, by using logic to achieve what they deemed the correct interpretive result. Motivating their efforts was an unyielding scholarly belief that the fruits of recent and ongoing philosophical inquiries could show a logical continuity inherent in even those portions of Veda-based law that had frequently been the subjects of contentious disputes. The scholars' goal may have been novel, but their methodology had ancient roots. Indeed, the Veda-based legal tradition had long accepted the role of reason in the development of its doctrinal corpus by consciously, and intentionally, providing a framework for Veda-based law that granted human experience, and human reasoning, a degree of authority with regard to matters of purportedly Vedic origin.

Members of the Veda-based legal tradition imagined themselves to be presenting a workable guide to the application of various legal principles derived from the Veda, and they admitted, repeatedly, the authority of real-world legal practice in accomplishing this goal. They willingly accepted any reasonable legal doctrine, provided it was not inconsistent with the body of law derived from the Veda,[1] and thereby established a theoretical basis for their discipline that enabled them to tailor effective procedures, rights, and remedies, dealing with everything from religious donations to disputes about land boundaries, to the needs of disparate groups of people across time and space. The work of jurists on the subject of inheritance was consistent with this general sociolegal project, but it nevertheless reflected a profound internal disagreement about whether a man with male children had the right, perhaps even the responsibility, to dispose of his self-acquired estate as he saw

fit during his lifetime. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century logicians writing in Sanskrit believed that the right understanding of inheritance and family property could be achieved by using logic to divine the intention behind the root texts on which the jurists relied. They aimed thereby to supplant the authority of the jurists where logic dictated what they deemed a better result.

1. *Dharma*'s Move from Ritual to the Real World

Veda-based law is a way of referring to *dharmaśāstra*, the *śāstra*, or discipline, devoted to the study of *dharma*. To summarize briefly, *dharmaśāstra* consisted of four basic categories of texts: *dharmasūtra*-s, aphoristic works on *dharma* from the beginning of the first millennium; *smṛti*-s, versified works on *dharma* composed up to the eighth or ninth century; commentaries on a single *dharmasūtra* or *smṛti*, which emerged beginning sometime prior to the eighth century; and digests, called *nibandha*-s, often with commentary, of material from a variety of *smṛti*-s and *dharmasūtra*-s, emerging after the beginning of the second millennium.[2] *Dharmaśāstra*'s purported focus was *dharma* as expounded by the Veda,[3] and three forms of the Veda were universally accepted as sources of *dharma*: *śruti* (authoritative verbal statements on *dharma* derived from a directly cognizable Veda), *smṛti* (authoritative statements on *dharma* from the Veda revealed through a sage, like *Manu*), and *ācāra* (authoritative knowledge of *dharma*, the original source of which was the Veda, ascertained through the conduct of qualified individuals).[4] Of the three, *śruti* was purportedly more authoritative than *smṛti* and *smṛti* more so than *ācāra*.[5]

At first blush, *dharmaśāstra*'s professed Vedic connection should have forced a definition of *dharma* as some sort of Vedic injunction, heeding which a man could achieve final liberation.[6] In works like the *smṛti*-s, however, the Vedic origins of which were presumed but not perceived, only some rules were Vedic, regardless of their injunctive capacity. Rules that were self-explanatory could be presumed to be non-Vedic, because they could have been derived through human reason alone, but rules that seemed to serve no visible purpose could be considered *dharma*, since only the Veda would have enjoined what no reasonable person would otherwise have done.[7] Consequently, whatever *dharma* was discussed in *dharmaśāstra* should have pertained exclusively to activities focused on *śreyas* (the *summum bonum*), rather than on the achievement of mundane aims.

It is no surprise, then, that the *Āpastambadharmasūtra*, an early aphoristic treatise on *dharma*, declared that "one should not heed [statements about *dharma*] on account of a worldly aim," since the result would only be obtained

in the next world,[8] or that the *Manusmṛti* consciously differentiated *dharma* from *artha* (politically and materially motivated activity) and *kāma* (desire).[9] Those same works of *dharmaśāstra*, however, labeled as disquisitions on *dharma* discussions of laws concerning statecraft, inheritance, wages, gambling, and so on. As a result, a definition of *dharma* had to be sufficiently supple to encompass actions with a more mundane result. It was better, then, to say that something was *dharma*, and necessarily connected with the Veda, if its ultimate aim was transcendental, regardless of any additional benefits that accrued in the material world, yet was distinguished from *artha* and *kāma*, the sole purpose of which was the acquisition of wealth, power, pleasure, or the like.[10]

From a legal standpoint, an analytical framework that forced scholars to quibble over whether some rule was *dharma* or *artha* would hardly have been helpful and would merely have encouraged an arbitrary decision on the status of otherwise canonical rules based on a writer's personal preferences. With this in mind, Vijñāneśvara, a *paramahaṃsa*, ascetic, at the court of King Vikramāditya VI, ruler of the Deccan Cālukya dynasty from 1076 to 1126, explained in his commentary on the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, the *Mitākṣarā*, "A Breviloquent [Exposition of the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*]," that *dharmaśāstra* was actually designed to expound all four *puruṣārtha*-s (ends of man), namely, *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa* (liberation), because all four—even desire—were squarely rooted in *dharma*.[11]

Vijñāneśvara then chose to separate *dharmaśāstra* altogether from *śruti*, the extant Veda. In his commentary on the the first verse of the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*—"Having paid homage to Yājñavalkya, lord of the yogis, the sages said, 'Tell us the *dharma*-s of the *varṇa*-s [castes], the *āśrama*-s [life stages], and mixed castes, without leaving anything out'"—he wrote that *dharma* here was to be considered *smārta* (belonging to the *smṛti* literature),[12] which he distinguished from the *dharma* directly cognized through Vedic word, and bound up with ritual, namely, *śrauta dharma*. By identifying *dharmaśāstra*'s *dharma* as exclusively *smārta*,[13] Vijñāneśvara ensured that any conflicts of law, or conflicting interpretations about law, would not fall victim to appeals to authority, where a conclusion that one rule was *śruti*, and thus inherently superior to a conflicting, *smṛti* rule, would actually prove dispositive. Instead, where a conflict between texts or textual authorities arose, the issue could, in certain cases, simply be settled by establishing one text as a general rule and the other as an exception based on logical continuity or discontinuity with previous cases.[14]

The *dharmaśāstra* of the *Mitākṣarā* encompassed a set of six separate

regulatory systems that supplied standards of conduct based on status, age, status and age together, political standing, morality, and simply being a natural person: (1) obligations imposed on particular castes, like the prohibition against Brāhmaṇa-s drinking liquor; (2) obligations peculiar to a stage in life, like begging after having given up one's home or laying the sacred fires within one's home; (3) obligations on a person of a particular caste who was in a particular stage in life, like carrying a staff of *palāśa* wood; (4) obligations incumbent on people endowed with particular privileges, such as a legitimate king's duty to protect his subjects; (5) obligations that would arise when a person did what he was not supposed to do, or failed to do what he was required to do; and (6) general obligations common to the human race, including the low-caste *caṇḍāla*-s, non-*ārya*-s, and so on, such as not killing living creatures.[15]

This *dharmaśāstra* was not limited to the twice-born or even to a particular geographical region. While Vijñāneśvara necessarily parroted the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*'s claim that the geographical scope of *dharma* could be understood in terms of the sporting grounds of the black antelope,[16] he seemed reluctant to read that statement as a restriction. Instead, he implicitly encouraged the export of *dharmaśāstra* wherever power could back it up by exhorting sovereigns to support local laws and practices of distant, conquered lands to the extent that they were not opposed to *dharmaśāstra* itself.[17] And he stated explicitly that within a sovereign's territory all local, household, and customary practices not inconsistent with *dharmaśāstra* were to be considered part of *dharmaśāstra*.[18] With the sole exception of disputes among merchants, for whom he may have permitted separate mercantile tribunals,[19] *dharmaśāstra* was a complete, and all-encompassing, legal system.

In order to have the force of law among men, *dharmaśāstra*, like any set of edicts, statutes, or precepts, needed to promise remedies for disputes. Vijñāneśvara's extensive treatment of the subject of such disputes, or *vyavahāra*-s, is therefore unsurprising. *Vyavahāra*-s most closely approximated modern-day civil actions and, as a result, required both a claim that was actionable within a court of competent jurisdiction and effort on the part of the injured party to summon and involve a defendant in a lawsuit. Though classified by the heading of law under which they fell—nonpayment of debts, slander, and so on—*vyavahāra*-s were all subject to a unified set of judicial procedures. All, for example, were initiated when a person came of his own accord to the king's court, a royally authorized court of a community of mixed-caste men practicing diverse occupations, a royally authorized court of mixed-caste professionals, or a royally authorized family tribunal,[20] with a reasonable claim.[21] Vijñāneśvara believed that the court system would only function with

royal support, and he threatened lax rulers with half the moral taint of any criminal or civil wrong committed owing to their inept administration of justice.[22] Implicit in his threat was a recognition that *dharmaśāstra*'s authority in matters of civil and criminal law was tenuous at best,[23] and that, without the backing of government, alternative solutions might gain the upper hand.

2. *Dharma* and *Dāya*

Vijñāneśvara's professed intention to have *dharmaśāstra* exert total control over the human experience helps to explain why he and his fellow scholars made the partition of inheritance, or *dāyabhāga*, a canonical concern. The basic concept of *riktha*, property belonging to a son as inheritance, was uncontested and had been treated as such as early as the *Ṛg Veda*.[24] Where, in theory, a father had as his only heir a single, natural-born son, *riktha* was simply the totality of the father's assets.[25] This *riktha* went more or less unmentioned in *dharmaśāstra* because it was never the source of *vyavahāra*-s, or disputes. By contrast, the manner in which multiple heirs could become *rikthin*-s, possessors of *riktha*, through the *vibhāga*, partition, of *dāya*, paternal and ancestral property, the shares of which had yet to be specified, was fertile ground for legal scholarship.[26] Reflecting, no doubt, real-world anxieties, scholars became embroiled in disputes about how inheritance should, in theory, be divided.

To put an end to confusion about the law, Jīmūtavāhana, a resident of Bengal at the turn of the twelfth century, devoted a portion of his massive treatise, *Dharmaratna*, "A Gem [Among the Works on] *Dharma*,"[27] to the partition of inheritance, declaring that he would enlighten scholars of *dharma*, who had gotten into frequent disagreements about the partition of inheritance because they had failed to examine properly the canonical works on *smārta dharma*, such as the *Manusmṛti*.[28] Jīmūtavāhana's understanding of the thorny matter of inheritance appeared to conflict directly with that of his contemporary, Vijñāneśvara. Since both authors' works found their adherents, the steady emergence of a body of commentarial literature eventually gave rise to the identification of two of the major theories of inheritance law, "Dāyabhāga" and "Mitākṣarā," that captured at least a part of the legal imagination of South Asia for nearly a millennium.

In brief, Jīmūtavāhana argued that sons were established as potential heirs to their father's property on their birth but acquired proprietary rights only on his death or disqualification as an owner.[29] Citing *Manusmṛti* IX.104,[30] which provided sons with no property rights as long as their parents lived, Jīmūtavāhana claimed that a father's death actually caused the creation of

the sons' proprietary rights, just as common legal practice recognized that a donor's act of giving produced the proprietary right of the donee in the thing given.[31] While a father could dispose of his self-acquired property as he saw fit throughout his lifetime, he was restricted in his alienation of certain ancestral property, namely, immovable property that he had himself acquired through inheritance.[32] Although the *Vyāsasmṛti* explicitly enjoined a father from making a separate sale of even self-acquired immovable property, Jīmūtavāhana remarked that such a sale would be legally valid, and replied eloquently to his imagined opponents, "While there may a transgression of an injunction of Vedic origin by selling or giving what should not be sold or given, there is no failure of the sale or gift, for even one hundred Vedic utterances are powerless to make otherwise what already is."[33]

A father, then, could dispose of self-acquired property as he saw fit throughout his lifetime, but he could only partition ancestral, immovable property among his sons in accordance with a fixed system prescribed by *dharmaśāstra*. After his death, however, a father's entire estate, movables and immovables alike, was subject to the method of partition set out in *dharmaśāstra*. Consequently, Jīmūtavāhana appears to have viewed inheritance law as a set of penalty defaults, providing a manner of distribution that people could avoid, in part at least, by making gifts to worthy family members during their own lifetimes.[34] It was both more efficient and more equitable for individual families to sort out their own wealth transfers according to a diversity of individual requirements than to have a majoritarian solution imposed by jurists.[35]

Like Jīmūtavāhana, Vijñāneśvara relied on reason, common practice, and *smṛti* in developing his philosophy of inheritance law. While Jīmūtavāhana read *Manusmṛti* IX.104 to restrict the rights of sons, Vijñāneśvara read it as a mere description of one possible time for partition.[36] Instead, Vijñāneśvara claimed that it was common legal practice for sons to gain ownership of the family estate by birth and posited an utterance of the sage, Gautama, in support.[37] As a general rule, a man's capacity to sell or give away family property was restricted as soon as he had sons, and those sons could even use their power as coowners to force him to divide the ancestral estate against his will. There were, then, several occasions on which partition could take place: (1) when a father did not wish to partition the estate but had lost desire for material things, no longer wished to procreate, and had a wife in menopause;[38] (2) when a father desired partition or did not desire partition but had become incompetent, owing to illness, or was engaged in unlawful activity;[39] or (3) when a father died and his wife had entered menopause.[40] In terms of movable property,

however, Vijñāneśvara actually permitted a father complete independence in employing articles as he saw fit, whether in performing religious obligations, supporting the family, or making gifts to favored persons.[41]

3. Logic Tries to Resolve What *Dharmaśāstra* Cannot

The evolving mass of commentarial literature on the *Dāyabhāga* and *Mitākṣarā* might well have given the impression that there were only two possible, and conflicting, approaches to inheritance and family property in Veda-based law. As early as the fourteenth century, however, adherents of the philosophical school of *navya-nyāya* (New Logic) began to question whether *any* commentarial authority was necessary to find the true meaning of that law.[42] These new logicians aimed to focus exclusively on what people knew, and how they knew that they knew it, by discussing in detail the four basic means to knowledge: perception, inference, analogy, and verbal testimony. They first began to show interest in examining knowledge of property and ownership—an interest that may have been spurred by Vijñāneśvara's famous statement that property and ownership were universal human concerns,[43] or may just as easily have emerged out of a disciplinary squabble with the *mīmāṃsaka*-s, the Vedic exegetes. They quickly moved to focus on knowledge of other aspects of property law, such as acquisition by discovery, inheritance, gift, and the like.[44] By the seventeenth century, they were unambiguously presenting their views on law as a counterpoint to the literature on *dharmaśāstra* and, it seems, as a guide to legal practice as well.

Writers on logic, provided they were *Brāhmaṇa*-s and learned, had never lacked disciplinary authority to write on matters of *dharma*,[45] but the use of logic itself to interpret *smṛti* texts, to the exclusion of previous commentarial work on those texts, really was novel. In discussing inheritance, for example, seventeenth-century logicians used only a handful of citations from *smṛti* or *śruti*; altogether ignored celebrated contemporaneous work on the same subject, like Nīlakaṇṭha Bhaṭṭa's *Vyavahāramayūkha* and Mitra Misra's *Vīramitrodaya*; and eschewed, for the most part, textual exegesis, using the texts they did cite as mere footnotes on which to base their freestanding prose compositions. Indeed, where even so venerated a work as the *Mitākṣarā* had reached a conclusion contrary to reason, that conclusion could and would be set aside.[46]

Whether knowingly or not, the new logicians were activating the full scope of the old refrain from *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* II.21—namely, *smṛtyor virodhe nyāyas tu balavān vyavahārataḥ*—suggested by the gloss of the twelfth-century jurist, Aparārka:[47] "When there is a conflict between two *smṛti*-s that are

rooted in the Veda, *nyāya* [a method of logical reasoning], consisting of both inference and presumption, and capable of establishing the subject matters of the two as distinct in order to support the authoritativeness of both, is of greater weight [than the existing literature on civil and criminal law] because it is required [that both *smṛti*-s be followed]."[48]

Authorized by *smṛti*, both implicitly and explicitly, the new logicians wrote works in the spirit of *vyavasthāpatra*-s, Sanskrit documents expressing authoritative opinions on difficult points of law. That these were taken seriously is confirmed by a report from William Ward, an early nineteenth-century missionary in Bengal, who cited as an authority on the law of inheritance the anonymous *Svatvarahasya*, "The Mystery of Property and Ownership," a work of new logic on property and ownership, inheritance, gift, and ritual renunciation.[49] Moreover, the involvement of Jayarāma Nyāyapañcānana, a celebrated seventeenth-century Bengali logician who had signed onto a more traditional *vyavasthāpatra* in Benares in 1657,[50] and Gokulanātha Upādhyāya, a seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Maithilī polymath who purportedly wrote on everything, including law,[51] suggests that the notion of a juridico-philosophical treatise was regarded positively by the logical tradition itself.

The contribution of the new logicians can be best ascertained by turning to a few long intractable issues in the law of inheritance and family property, together with solutions proposed by Jayarāma, Gokulanātha, and the author of the *Svatvarahasya*.

3.1. Jayarāma's *Svatvanirūpaṇa*

Jayarāma wrote a short work called the *Svatvanirūpaṇa*,[52] "An Exposition of Property and Ownership," in which he used the tools of logical reasoning first to analyze the nature of property and ownership and then to resolve thorny questions related to the two, such as whether a person could actually own the atoms of an item he had purchased. Among those thorny questions that he tackled was when sons would inherit their fathers' property. While Jayarāma adopted unequivocally Jīmūtavāhana's notion that a father's death or incapacity caused his sons' ownership of his ancestral and personal property,[53] he recognized a problem therein. According to Jīmūtavāhana, a father's becoming an outcaste on the commission of a grievous sin would result in both the destruction of any connection between him and his property and the devolution of that property onto his heirs.[54] But, Jayarāma realized, even if a father were to perform some act of penance at some point after the grievous sin was committed, he would be unable to recover his property. His attachment to his property would have been permanently severed, just as his

sons' (or heirs') attachment to that same property would have been created—ergo Jīmūtavāhana's insistence that *becoming an outcaste* must be understood to be functionally equivalent to *death* as a permanent, ownership-destroying event.[55]

Jayarāma was not the first of the new logicians to disagree with Jīmūtavāhana's conclusion. Indeed, in many ways, he was building on a vignette from the *Nyāyalīlāvatīprakāśadīdhiti* (An Exposition of [Vardhamāna's] *Nyāyalīlāvatīprakāśa* [Light for Lovely Lady Logic]) of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century new logician, Raghunātha Śiromaṇi. In his *Nyāyalīlāvatīprakāśadīdhiti*, Raghunātha argued that a grievous sin should not be deemed to destroy a father's ownership of his property. If it were so destructive, that father would not even be capable of employing an asset for the purposes of atonement without the permission of his sons. Thus, according to Raghunātha, a sinful father would retain his proprietary rights with respect to his assets at least for the limited purposes of atonement.[56]

Jayarāma did not disagree with Raghunātha, but he felt that the matter deserved a fuller exposition. He concluded that a father's commission of a grievous sin should result in the devolution of his property onto his sons only if that sin is never expiated at all.[57] There were, then, two possible results that could follow on a father's commission of an ultimately expiated sin. First, that father's sons could obtain temporary ownership of his property for the period subsequent to his sin but prior to expiation. That temporary ownership would be extinguished when expiation would result in the re-creation of the father's ownership. Even though the father would no longer own his property during this interim period, he would still have the right to use that property for the performance of expiatory rites. Alternatively, an ultimately expiated grievous sin might *not* nullify the father's ownership of his property at all. Instead, that sin might provide the father's sons with a robust right to use his property during his period of incapacity, much like a *purohita* would have the right to use the property of an impure king.[58]

Jayarāma also addressed the difficult question of whether a member of a joint family could actually give away immovable property—even that which he had acquired on his own. Texts on *dharma* seemed to indicate both that a person should donate immovable property and, at the same time, that no one should make a sale or gift of immovable property without the approval of other members of the family.[59] From a practical standpoint, then, the alienation of immovable property could be (1) impossible, (2) thoroughly effective but productive of moral taint (Jīmūtavāhana's position, noted above), or (3) effective and spiritually beneficial.[60] Jayarāma may well have felt it

important for potential donors of property to kings, temples, and righteous persons to know exactly when, and how, a gift would be included in category 3 (effective and spiritually beneficial gifts). He assured his readers that any *smṛti* or *śruti* text forbidding the gift of immoveable property necessarily implied the words "without the consent of all family members," and any such text authorizing the donation of such property necessarily implied the words "with the consent of all family members."[61] In this way, people attempting to adhere to the precepts of the *Vyāsasmṛti*, for example, namely, "no gift or sale of immovables or human chattel, even if self-acquired, is effective if made without the total involvement of one's sons,"[62] could also follow the Vedic injunction "one should donate immovable property."

3.2. Gokulanātha's *Nyāyasiddhāntatattvaviveka*

Five folios (114b to 119b) of the British Library's manuscript of Gokulanātha's monumental *Nyāyasiddhāntatattvaviveka*, "Discerning the Truth About the Settled Conclusions of the *Nyāya* System," are devoted to an elaborate discussion of property, ownership, gift, inheritance, gambling, and indebtedness. In the context of inheritance, Gokulanātha supported only those aspects of the *Dāyabhāga* and *Mitākṣarā* that he deemed to be logically tenable. He disagreed with Vijñāneśvara profoundly. The rule, he explained, was that sons would *not* have ownership of the estate while their father still lived. Exceptions to this rule were very limited. Only, for example, where property was lost and then recovered could it be subject to the common ownership of father and son, and there both father and son would become owners simultaneously. In that situation, then, Vijñāneśvara's theory about joint ownership would be correct. For where father and son owned property together, the father's use of that property absent his son's permission could be characterized as *adharma* and could even be equated with his wrongful giving away of the entire estate.[63]

Despite his opposition to the *Mitākṣarā*'s theory, Gokulanātha did not accept unquestioningly Jīmūtavāhana's view on sons' lack of ownership of the estate or adopt it wholesale like his predecessor, Jayarāma. Jayarāma had agreed with Jīmūtavāhana that a father's demise produced ownership in individual shares of his property for his sons, but he claimed that these shares were only manifested subsequent to the casting of lots.[64] Gokulanātha admitted that a father's existence obstructed his sons' ownership of the estate. Yet he concluded that the destruction of a father's ownership through his demise would result *either* in the simultaneous characterization of his sons as individual owners of various portions of the estate *or* in the production of a collective ownership shared by all the sons together. Were the latter to

be the case, the actual partitioning of the estate would destroy the collective ownership, and *then* each son would be characterized as an individual owner of a particular portion.[65]

3.3. The Anonymous *Svatvarahasya*

The author of the *Svatvarahasya* appeared, at first blush, to be a staunch opponent of the *Mitākṣarā* and a proponent of the *Dāyabhāga*.[66] He remarked that the *Mitākṣarā*'s interpretation of Gautama's famous dictum, "One obtains ownership of wealth by birth alone," was simply incorrect. First, it was contrary to both the *Manusmṛti* ("For while [their] mother and father live, [sons] are not owners of [the] estate") and the *Devalasmṛti* ("[W]hile [the father] lives, and is free from sin, [the sons] have no ownership with respect to [the estate]"). Second, logicians (*prāmāṇika*-s) had determined that Gautama actually meant that sons would acquire ownership of the offspring of one of their father's slaves or cows after his death, and that such offspring's mere birth would make the sons owners—not the father's demise.[67]

Although the author of the *Svatvarahasya* adhered to Jīmūtavāhana's theory that sons gained ownership of the estate only on a father's demise or disqualification, willing partition of the estate, joining of a mendicant order, or conscious renunciation of all his property, he disputed that any of these events actually caused the sons' proprietary rights.[68] If each of the aforementioned events were to cause ownership, he argued, a father's death, for example, would fail to provide a son's sister with the share of her dead, unwed, and childless brother.[69] In such a case, her father would have already died, providing her brother with ownership of the property, and that single cause would have been exhausted, leaving no reason for the sister to inherit her brother's property, since her position as a potential heir to her father's estate was entirely dependent on her father's death. Instead, it was better to explain the causation of ownership by inheritance in terms of both blood relationships and particular cessations of a former owner's ownership.[70]

Furthermore, while the author of the *Svatvarahasya* did not believe that a father's sons would first obtain collective ownership of the estate and then acquire portional ownership through partition, he also disagreed with Jīmūtavāhana about the need for a casting of lots to manifest the sons' shares. Instead, he contended, a father's demise or disqualification, willing partition of the estate, joining of a mendicant order, or conscious renunciation of all his property would result in the simultaneous production of a portional ownership of the estate for each son, which would remain untouched by partition. And the function of partition would be merely to provide people with true and

certain knowledge about the preexisting portional ownership of each son.[71]

Conclusion

Work by Jayarāma, Gokulanātha, and the author of the *Svatvarahasya* is clear evidence that the new logicians sought to clarify matters that had previously been treated exclusively in accordance with the interpretive practices of *dharmaśāstra*. The specificity of their inquiries suggests that they were not merely interested in developing legal theory but also sought to improve legal practice through their investigations. First, obstructing sons' claims to property by birth would have reduced the chances of partition being forced in a father's lifetime and might have prevented impediments to a father's ability to conduct business. Second, preventing the actual devolution of property on commission of a sin might have protected families from squabbles, as sons would otherwise attempt to wrest control of family property from their fathers, and fathers control back from their sons. Finally, confirming that spiritual benefit would attach only to donations of immovable property performed with the consent of all family members might well have deterred rash or unilateral alienations of important, income-producing properties.

The new logicians' project was, however, inherently conservative, and any social benefits must be considered incidental. They believed, or appeared to believe, that the sources of knowledge of *dharma* were inerrant. And they sought simply to divine the proper understanding behind and application of those sources by removing the accretion of subsequent commentarial glosses and by using the hermeneutic tools of their own superior discipline, namely, new logic.

Did the new logicians, then, set out to reinvent *dharmaśāstra* itself by starting anew the commentarial process that had been begun a millennium earlier? There are only a handful of works attesting to such a project, and no logician subsequent to Gokulanātha ever attempted anything similar. It will, then, continue to remain unclear whether scholars like Jayarāma wanted to engage in a full-scale reformation of the study of *dharma* or whether they merely wanted to test the tools of logic on seemingly intractable issues.

Notes

[1] *Manubhāṣya* VII.1: *pramāṇāntaramūlā hy atra dharmā ucyante. na sarve vedamūlāḥ. anyamūlatve ca yad atra dharmaśāstrāviruddhaṃ tad ucyate. tathā ca kātyāyanaḥ arthaśāstroktam utsṛjya dharmaśāstroktam āvrajed iti.*

[2] See Olivelle 2003: 1–4. As with Ludo Rocher's edition of Jīmūtavāhana's *Dāyabhāga*, noted below, I have attributed material from the English-language introduction of Patrick Olivelle's edition of the *Dharmasūtra*-s with reference to the author himself, but material from the Sanskrit text of the same edition with reference to the text itself. My understanding of the *Dāyabhāga* and the *Dharmasūtra*-s has benefited directly from Rocher's and Olivelle's English translations of, respectively, the *Dāyabhāga* and *Dharmasūtra*-s.

[3] Manubhāṣya II.6: *vedaśabdena ṛgyajuḥsāmāni brāhmaṇasahitāny ucyante.*

[4] Ibid., II.12: *ekam eva dharme pramāṇaṃ vedākhyam. tasya tv ete bhedāḥ smṛtyādayaḥ*; II.10 (glossing *Manusmṛti* II.10a–b: *śrutis tu vedo vijñeyo dharmaśāstraṃ tu vai smṛtiḥ*): *yatra śrūyate dharmānuśāsanaśabdaḥ sā śrutiḥ. yatra ca smaryate sā smṛtiḥ*; II.6: *evam ācārasyāpi vedavidbhir adṛṣṭārthatayā ācaryamāṇasya smṛtivad eva prāmāṇyaṃ mūlasambhavāt.*

[5] The taxonomy of *dharma*'s sources that I provide is the briefest of overviews. I present it in the interest of argument and fully admit its limitations in advance.

[6] *Śābarabhāṣya* 1.1.1–2: *tatra ko dharmaḥ kathaṃlakṣaṇa ity ekenaiva sūtreṇa vyākhyātam—codanālakṣaṇo 'rtho dharma iti . . . sa hi niḥśreyasena puruṣaṃ saṃyunakti iti.*

[7] Ibid., 1.3.2: *tena ye dṛṣṭārthās te tata eva pramāṇam. ye tv adṛṣṭārthās teṣu vaidikaśabdānumānam iti.*

[8] *Āpastambadharmasūtra* 1.20.1: *nemaṃ laukikam arthaṃ puraskṛtya dharmāñś caret.*

[9] *Manubhāṣya* II.13 (quotation of *Manusmṛti* II.13): *arthakāmeṣv asaktānāṃ dharmajñānaṃ vidhīyate / dharmaṃ jijñāsamānānāṃ pramāṇaṃ paramaṃ śrutiḥ.*

[10] *Tantravārttika* 1.3.2: *tasmāt saty api dṛṣṭārthatve saṃbhāvyate vedamūlatvaṃ niyamādṛṣṭasiddher ananyapramāṇakatvāt. ataś ca gurvanugamanāder naimittikatvād akriyāyāṃ prayavāyaḥ karaṇe ca na bhavati. dṛṣṭaṃ ca prīto gurur adhyāpayiṣyatīty evamādi niṣpadyate . . . tatra yāvad dharmamokṣasambandhi tad vedaprabhavaṃ. yat tv arthasukhaviṣayaṃ tal lokavyavahārapūrvakam iti vivektavyam.* See also Kane 1993: vol. 3, 838–39.

[11] *Mitākṣarā* I.1: *tatra yadyapi dharmārthakāmamokṣāḥ śāstreṇānena pratipādyante, tathāpi dharmasya prādhānyād dharmagrahaṇam. prādhānyaṃ ca dharmamūlatvād itareṣāṃ . . . arthaleśo 'pi na dharmam antareṇeti. evaṃ kāmamokṣāv apīti.*

[12] Ibid. (glossing *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* I.1: *yogīśvaraṃ yājñavalkyaṃ saṃpūjya munayo 'bruvan / varṇāśrametarāṇāṃ no brūhi dharmān aśeṣataḥ*): *atra ca dharmaśabdaḥ*

ṣaḍvidhasmārtadharmaviṣayaḥ.

[13] See Wetzler 2004: 632.

[14] Mitāuṣāra II.21: *smṛtyor virodhe nyāyas tu balavān vyavahārataḥ. yatra smṛtyoḥ parasparato virodhas tatra virodhaparihārāya viṣayavyavasthāpanādau utsargāpavādādilakṣaṇo nyāyo balavān samarthaḥ. sa ca nyāyaḥ kutaḥ pratyetavya ity ata āha—vyavahārata iti. vyavahārād vṛddhavyavahārād anvayavyatirekalakṣaṇād avagamyate.* See Davis 2007 for a thorough investigation of the matter of *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* II.21, from which my translation benefited. Davis also provided several important suggestions that have been incorporated into the body of this essay.

[15] Ibid. I.2: *tatra varṇadharmo brāhmaṇo nityaṃ madyaṃ varjayed ityādiḥ. āśramadharmo 'gnīndhanabhaikṣacaryādiḥ. varṇāśramadharmaḥ pālāśo daṇḍo brāhmaṇasyetyevamādiḥ. guṇadharmaḥ śāstrīyābhiṣekādiguṇayuktasya rājñaḥ prajāparipālanādiḥ. nimittadharmo vihitākaraṇapratiṣiddhasevananimittaṃ prāyaścittam. sādhāraṇadharmo 'hiṃsādiḥ. na hiṃsyāt sarvā bhūtāni ity ācaṇḍālaṃ sādhāraṇo dharmaḥ.*

[16] Ibid.: *yasmin deśe mṛgaḥ kṛṣṇas tasmin dharmān nibodhata.*

[17] Ibid., I.343: *asau paripālanīyo yadi śāstraviruddho na bhavati.*

[18] Ibid., II.1: *deśādisamayadharmasyāpi dharmaśāstraviruddhasya dharmaśāstraviṣayatvān na pṛthag upādānam.* (The *ṭippaṇī* notes that *ādi* means *gṛha*.)

[19] Ibid., II.2: *lokarañjanārthaṃ katipayair vaṇigbhir apy adhiṣṭhitaṃ sadaḥ kartavyam. yathāha kātyāyanaḥ kulaśīlavayovṛttavittavadbhir amatsaraiḥ*[,] *vanigbhir syāt katipayaiḥ kulabhūtair adhiṣṭhitam.* It is unclear whether Vijñāneśvara meant that a separate court would be established for merchants, like the royally authorized inferior courts for *pūga*-s, *śreṇi*-s, and *kula*-s that he envisioned, see generally *Mitākṣarā* II.30, or that merchants would be allowed to participate as judges at the royal court.

[20] Ibid., II.30: *nṛpeṇa rājñā adhikṛtāḥ vyavahāradarśane niyuktāḥ - rājñā sabhāsadaḥ kāryāḥ ityādinoktāḥ pūgāḥ samūhāḥ bhinnajātīnāṃ bhinnavṛttīnāṃ ekasthānanivāsināṃ - yathā grāmanāgarādayaḥ, śreṇayo nānājātīnām ekajātīnām apy ekakarmopajīvināṃ saṃghātāḥ . . . kulāni jñātisaṃbandhibandhūnāṃ samūhāḥ, eteṣāṃ nṛpādhikṛtādīnāṃ caturṇāṃ pūrvaṃ pūrvaṃ yad yat pūrvaṃ paṭhitaṃ tat tad guru balavaj jñeyaṃ veditavyam.*

[21] See ibid., II.5: *svayam evāgatyāvedayati, na rājapreritas tatpuruṣaprerito veti.*

[22] Ibid., I.337 (quoting *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* I.337): *arakṣyamānāḥ kurvanti yat kiṃ cit kilbiṣaṃ prajāḥ / tasmāt tu nṛpater ardhaṃ yasmāt gṛhṇāty asau karān.*

[23] See Vijñāneśvara's primary justification for ownership by birth in *Mitāuṣāra* prologue to II.114: *loke ca putrādīnāṃ janmanaiva svatvaṃ prasiddhataraṃ nāpahnavam arhati.*

[24] Kane 1993: vol. 3, 543: "*[R]iktha* occurring in the sūtra and smṛti literature is

also employed in Ṛgveda III.31.2 'the son of the body does not give to his sister the ancestral wealth, but makes her the receptacle for the son of her husband.'"

[25] *Mitākṣarā* II.51 (*ṭippaṇī*): *pitṛdhanam riktha, tataś ca putro rikthagrāhaḥ.*

[26] *Dāyabhāga* I.7: *saṃbandhyantarasadbhāvapratipakṣasya saṃbandhasyāvayaveṣv eva vibhāgavyaṅgyasvatvāpādakatvāt.*

[27] Rocher 2002: 6–8.

[28] *Dāyabhāga* I.1 (prologue): *manvādivākyāny avimṛ[ś]ya yeṣāṃ yasmin vivādo bahudhā budhānām / teṣāṃ prabodhāya sa dāyabhāgo nirūpaṇīyāḥ.*

[29] Ibid., I.20: *kvacij janmaiveti ca janmanibandhanatvāt pitāputrasaṃbandhasya pitṛmaraṇasya ca svatvakāraṇatvāt paramparayā varṇanam.*

[30] Ibid., I.14 (quoting *Manusmṛti* IX.104): *ūrdhvaṃ pituś ca mātuś ca sametya bhrātaraḥ samam / bhajeran paitṛkaṃ riktham anīśās te hi jīvitoḥ.*

[31] *Dāyabhāga* I.21: *anyavyāpāreṇānyasya svatvam aviruddhaṃ śāstramūlatvād asya. dṛṣṭaṃ ca loke 'pi. dāne hi cetanoddeśaviṣiṣṭatyāgād eva dātṛvy[ā]pārāt saṃpradānasya dravye svāmitvam.* See Rocher 2002: 59: "Jīmūtavāhana's view to the effect that a gift is valid before acceptance has provoked much controversy."

[32] *Dāyabhāga* II.17: *idam suvyaktam—yadi pitā putrān vibhajati tadā svopātte nyūnādhikavibhāgam svecchayā putrebhyo dadyāt. paitāmahe tu naitad yasmāt tatra tulyaṃ svāmitvam. na punaḥ svacchandavṛttitā.*

[33] Ibid., II.29–30: *sthāvaraṃ dvipadaṃ caiva yady api svayam arjitam / asaṃbhūya sutān sarvān na dānaṃ na ca vikrayaḥ . . . tena dānavikrayakartavyatāniṣedhāt tatkaraṇād vidhyatikramo bhavati na tu dānādyaniṣpattiḥ vacanaśatenāpi vastuno 'nyathākaraṇāśakteḥ.* See Derrett 1958; and Rocher 1995.

[34] *Dāyabhāga* II.74: *svopārjitadhanāt punar guṇavattvena saṃmānārthaṃ bahukuṭumbatvena vā bharaṇārtham ayogyatvena vā kṛpayā bhaktatvena vā prasannatayādhikadānecchur nyūnādhikavibhāgaṃ kurvan dharmakārī pitā.*

[35] See Ayres and Gertner (1989).

[36] *Mitākṣarā* II.117: *vibhajeran sutāḥ pitror ūrdhvaṃ riktham ṛṇaṃ samam.*

[37] Ibid., prologue to II.114: *loke ca putrādīnāṃ janmanaiva svatvaṃ prasiddhataraṃ nāpahnavam arhati ... tathā utpattyaivārthasvāmitvaṃ labhetety ācāryaḥ iti gautamavacanāc ca.*

[38] Ibid., II.114: *vibhāgaṃ cet pitā kuryād iti. yadā pitur vibhāgecchā sa tāvad ekaḥ kālaḥ. aparo 'pi jīvaty api pitari dravyaniḥspṛhe nivṛttaramaṇe mātari ca nivṛttarajaskāyām pitur anicchāyām api putrecchayaiva vibhāgo bhavati.*

[39] Ibid.: *jīvati cecchati iti tṛtīyaḥ kālo darśitaḥ. tathā saraskāyām api mātary anicchaty api pitary adharmavartini dīrgharogagraste ca putrāṇām icchayā bhavati vibhāgaḥ.*

[40] Ibid.: *gautamenāpi ūrdhvaṃ pituḥ putrā rikthaṃ vibhajeran iti uktvā nivṛtte cāpi*

rajasi iti dvitīyaḥ kālo darśitaḥ.

[41] Ibid., prologue to II.114: *tathāpi pitur āvaśyakeṣu dharmakṛtyeṣu vācanikeṣu pr asādadānakuṭumbabharaṇāpadvimokṣādiṣu ca sthāvaravyatiriktadravyaviniyoge svātantryam iti sthitam. sthāvare tu svārjite pitrādiprāpte ca putrādipāratantryam eva.*

[42] For scholarship on logic and law, see generally Derrett 1976–77: vols. 1–2 for three seminal articles: "Svatvarahasyam: A 17th Century Contribution to Logic and Law"; "The Development of the Concept of Property in India, c. A.D. 800–1800"; and "An Indian Contribution to the Study of Property," from which I first learned of Jayarāma's *Svatvavādārtha (Svatvanirūpaṇa)*, Gokulanātha's *Nyāyasiddhāntatattvaviveka*, and the *Svatvarahasya*.

[43] *Mitākṣarā*, prologue to II.114: *pratyantavāsinām apy adṛṣṭaśāstravyavahārāṇāṃ svatvavyavahāro dṛśyate, krayavikrayādidarśanāt.*

[44] The *mīmāṃsaka*-s, Pārthasārathi Miśra and Bhavanātha, had been discussing the matter some centuries before Vardhamāna Upādhyāya wrote his *Nyāyalīlāvatīprakāśa*, and the *naiyāyika*, Bhagīratha Ṭhakkura, appears to be responding to the followers of the *mīmāṃsaka*, Murāri Miśra, in his *Nyāyalīlāvatīprakāśavivṛti*.

[45] *Mitāuṣāra* I.3: *tatraitāni brāhmaṇena vidyāprāptaye dharmānuṣṭhānāya cādhigantavyāni. kṣatriyavaiśyābhyāṃ dharmānuṣṭānāya.*

[46] *Svatvarahasya*, fo. 39a: *iti mitākṣarālikhanasya ca yuktiviruddhatvenānupādeyatvāt.* In the reader's interest, I have added punctuation where necessary to citations from the manuscripts of the *Svatvarahasya*, *Svatvanirūpaṇa*, *Nyāyasiddhāntatattvaviveka*, and *Nyāyalīlāvatīprakāśadīdhiti*.

[47] As Davis (2007) shows, various commentators on the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* have read this passage in a myriad of ways. Within the *Mitākṣarā*, there is some support for the reading above, since Vijñāneśvara himself translated *nyāya* on occasion as *tarkavidyā*, "the science of logic, or reason" (*Mitākṣarā* I.3).

[48] *Ṭīkā* II.21: *smṛtyor vedamūlayor virodhe tatprāmāṇyanirvāhāya bhinnaviṣayavyavasthāpako 'numānārthāpattyātmako nyāyo 'pekṣaṇīyatvād balavān.*

[49] Derrett 1976–77: vol. 1, 372; Ward 1818: 448.

[50] Gode 1944: 2–10; Mishra 1966: 436–38; Pollock 2001: 21; Thakur 2003: 357.

[51] Bhattacharya 1958: 193ff.

[52] The work is alternately titled *Svatvavādārtha*. I am indebted to Anjaneya Sarma for transcribing a very difficult palm-leaf manuscript in old Telugu script into *devanāgarī*, and to Jonardon Ganeri for facilitating the aforementioned transcription.

[53] *Svatvanirūpaṇa*, p. 3: *putrādisvatve ca pitrādimaraṇaṃ tajjanyapitrādisvatvanāśa ev[a] vikrayādyajanyapitrādisvatvanāśakatvena hetuḥ.*

[54] Ibid.: *svottaravartitajjanmīyaprāyaścittaprāgabhāvavirahaviśiṣṭaṃ pātityādikam eva pitrādisvatvanāśakaṃ putrādisvatvotpādam iti.* See *Dāyabhāga* I.44.

[55] See *Dāyabhāga* I.44: tasmāt *patitatvanispṛhatvoparamaiḥ svatvāpagama ekaḥ kālo.*

[56] *Nyāyalīlāvatīprakāśadīdhiti* (NLPD) 62a, fo. 11b; and NLPD 1213b, fo. 11b: *pitrādi svatvavināśakapātityamātrasya tathātve putrādyanumatim aṃtareṇa pitrādeḥ prāyaścit tīyayogidhanaviniyogakṣamatāpi na syāt. tasmāc ca prāyaścittasyāpi dhanādhikāra iti.*

[57] *Svatvanirūpaṇa*, p. 3: *yat tu svottaravartita[j]janmīyaprāyaścittaprāgabhāvavir ahaviśiṣṭaṃ pātityādikam eva pitrādisvatvanāśakaṃ putrādisvatvotpādakam iti.* If expiation is what ensures the reintegration of a sinner into his caste, then it would not be incoherent to contend that a man who remains outcaste throughout his life cannot regain ownership of his property. See also Kane 1991: vol. 4, 64: "Manu XI.47 provides: 'A twice-born man having become liable to perform a penance (for a sin), whether he committed it through fate or by some act committed in a former existence, must not have intercourse with virtuous men until he performs the proper penance.'"

[58] *Svatvanirūpaṇa*, p. 4: *na ca pātityādimātrasya pitrādisvatvanāśakatve putrādyanumatiṃ vinā . . . prāyaścittopayogidravyagrahaṇe [']pi pitrāder adhikāro na syād iti vācyaṃ prāyaścittavidhāyakavacanabalād eva tanmātrādhikārasiddheḥ. evaṃ ca sati prāyaścittottaraṃ putrādisvatvanāśapitrādisvatvotpattikalpa ne gauravaṃ prāmāṇikatvān na doṣāya. pare tu pātityādimātraṃ na nāśakaṃ putrādeḥ pāpānutpattiś ca tadā putrāder viniyogamātrapratipādakavacanabalād aśucirājādidravyasya āvaśyaka[. . .]viniyuñjānasya purohitāder ity āhuḥ.*

[59] The words, *sthāvaraṃ dadyāt*, and, *naikaḥ kuryāt krayaṃ dānaṃ parasparamataṃ vinā*, are cited throughout the text.

[60] *Svatvanirūpaṇa*, p. 2: *atha dānādisiddhau dharmādharmayoḥ kalpane gauravaṃ iti cen na adharmakalpanasya samānatvāt dharmakalpanasya phalamukhatvenādoṣatvād ity āhuḥ. naitad yuktam.*

[61] Ibid., p. 3: *iti na vikalpo vākyabhedo vā. vibhaktāvibhaktāv ād[ā]yādā[] sthāvare samāḥ . . . sthāvaraṃ dvipadaṃ caiva yadyapi svayaṃ arjitaṃ, asaṃbhūya sutāṃ sarvāṃ na dānaṃ na ca vikraya ity anena dānādibhedabodhād dānādikaṃ na siddhyatīty eva yuktasamānavibhaktikapadajanyānupayogyupasthitivirah ād bhedabodhāsaṃbhavāt kṛtam ity adhyāhāre kartavyam ity adhyāhāra eva vacanāntaraikavākyatayā uktayuktyā ca yuktim ity.*

[62] Ibid.: *sthāvaraṃ dvipadaṃ caiva yady api svayam arjitam, asaṃbhūya sutān sarvān na dānaṃ na ca vikrayaḥ.* Jayarāma does not mention the *Vyāsasmṛti* by name, but Rocher 2002: 75 provides the necessary attribution.

[63] *Nyāyasiddhāntatattvaviveka*, fo. 115b: *jīvati pitari putrāṇāṃ na svatvam utpadyate yatra naṣṭoddhāranibaṃdhādau tatra syāt sadṛśaṃ svāmyaṃ pituḥ putrasyobhayor iti smaryate tatra naṣṭoddhārādau pituḥ svatvotpa[t]tisamakālam eva putrāṇāṃ svatvam utpadyate atha vā satpathasādhāraṇe svatve putrānumatiṃ vinā na pitrā viniyojyaṃ tadviniyogaḥ sarvasvadānādivad adharma ity atra tātparyaṃ.*

[64] *Svatvanirūpaṇa*, p. 2: *vastuto dāyabhāgakṛnmate guḍikāpātādeḥ svatvavyañjakatvād*

avibhakte 'pi svāṃśe svasyaiva svatvaṃ na tu bhrātraṃtarasya.

[65] *Nyāyasiddhāntatattvaviveka*, fo. 116b: *naṣṭe pitṛsvatve putrāṇāṃ yugapad eva svatvāni sarvanirūpitam ekam ekam eva vā svatvam utpadyate dāyabhāgena ca samuccitaṃ svatvaṃ vināśya pratyeka[ṃ] parisamāptāni svatvāni janyaṃte.*

[66] The *Svatvarahasya* is the longest work of New Logic on law; has numerous recensions in several scripts; can be found, in some form or another, in archives throughout India; was current, as discussed above, in early nineteenth-century Bengal, yet has no indication of authorship; and finds no mention in any Sanskrit literature on *dharmaśāstra* or *navya-nyāya* anywhere. In other words, the most thorough work extant on this topic happens to be one without an author, which may as well have never existed given the extent of its influence on the Sanskrit tradition. In his article, "Svatvarahasyam: A 17th Century Contribution to Logic and Law" (Derrett 1976–77: vol. 1, 365–72), Derrett argued that Gadādhara was the *Svatvarahasya*'s author. His claim is rendered credible because the *Vādavāridhi*, a collection of Sanskrit essays/treatises published in Benares in the 1930s, implied Gadādhara's authorship of the *Svatvajanakatāvāda*, a printed version of portions of the *Svatvarahasya* (though without such express identification). More significant, the Jain logician, Yaśovijaya, who was a contemporary of Gadādhara, wrote a *Svatvavāda* that adopted large portions of the *Svatvarahasya* without attribution. It is, however, unclear how probative of Gadādhara's authorship one should consider Yaśovijaya's borrowing.

[67] *Svatvarahasya*, fo. 38b–39a: *ata eva jīvati pitari taddhane 'pi putrāṇāṃ nādhikāraḥ . . . utpattyaivārth[a]svāmitv[aṃ] labhata iti gotamavacanasya kvacij janmaivārjanaṃ yathā pitṛdhan[a] iti prāmāṇikābhidhānasya ca prāguktarītyā pitṛmaraṇottarajāte pa itṛkadāsadāsīgavādijanyāpatyaparamparārūpārthaviṣayakatvāt. anyathā ūrddhvaṃ pituś ca mātuś ca sametya bhrātaraḥ samaṃ / bhajeran paitṛkaṃ [ri]ktham anīśās te hi jīvator iti manuvacanavirodhāt. anīśāḥ* [a]*svāminaḥ. pitary ū[r]ddhvaṃ gate putrā vibhajeyur dhanaṃ pituḥ / asvāmyaṃ hi bhaved eṣāṃ nirdoṣe pitari sthit[a] iti devalavirodhāc ca. . . . janmamātreṇaiva putrasya pitṛdhane svatvam utpadyata iti mitākṣarālikhanasya ca yuktiviruddhatvenānupādeyatvāt.*

[68] Ibid., fo. 13b: *pitrādidhaneṣu pitrādīnāṃ maraṇapātityapravrajy[o]pekṣādibhyaḥ svatvanāśe saty avyavadhānenaiva putrādīnāṃ svatvotpādakatvasya vācanikatvāt.*

[69] Ibid., fo. 16b–17a: *nanūtpattiḥ kāraṇatāvacchedakasa[ṃ]bandhatve pitṛmaraṇottaraṃ patnyādirahitabhrātṛsaṃkrāntadhane bhrātṛmaraṇottaraṃ bhaginyās tatsutasya vā svatvānutpattiprasaṅgaḥ*. See Kane 1993: vol. 3, 749; and Rocher 2002: 200.

[70] See *Svatvarahasya*, fo. 21a–b: *vastutas tu svatvanāśatvenaiva tadīyaputranirūpita svatvaviśeṣatvāvacchin[n]aṃ prati viśeṣaṇatāviśeṣāvacchi[n]notpattisambandhena janakatvaṃ[] na tu dānavikrayādyajanyatvam api tatra niveśanīyaṃ*. The *Svatvarahasya*'s explanation of how inheritance functions is the most complex of the contributions to law made by the new logicians. The sentence above merely alludes to the basic direction in which the author of the *Svatvarahasya* proceeded, since there is

not sufficient space here even to summarize the findings contained in fo. 13a–23b.

[71] Ibid., fo. 42a–43a: *svatantrās tu pitṛmaraṇādyuttaraṃ maraṇādijanyapi[tṛ] svatvanāśarūpasya utpattisambandhena sarvvatra viśiṣṭatayā sarvvatraiva pitṛdhane sarvveṣāṃ bhrātṝṇām svāmibhede vibhi[nn]āni nānāsvatvāni yugapaj jāyante . . . tāni ca svatvāni na vibhāganāśyāni kin tu vibhāgaprākkālāvacchedenaiva sarvvatra pitṛdhane varttante . . . vibhāgasya pramātvañ [ca].*

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15

The Śūdra in History: From Scripture to Segregation

Ananya Vajpeyi

In the past twenty-five years, no one in Sanskrit and Indic studies has done more to illuminate the historical life of the Sanskrit language and its knowledge systems than Sheldon Pollock. This essay takes as its starting point a corpus of texts produced in and around a center of Sanskrit learning in early modernity, Varanasi. Pollock has described this city in terms of its leading thinkers, their works, debates and patrons, and the new genres of literature and systematic thought that they produced throughout the seventeenth century (2001a, 2002). Pollock's reconstruction of Varanasi's intellectual milieu on the eve of colonialism is comprehensive, and its detail continues to be augmented by a number of other scholars.

My primary concern is with legal digests devoted to the subject of *śūdradharma*, moral-ethical codes about members of the *śūdra* caste, the fourth and hierarchically lowest of four orders in classical Brahmanical social theory. I have treated a body of these *nibandha* (digest) texts that I call the "*Śūdra* Archive" elsewhere (Vajpeyi 2010). Here, I am principally concerned to read older materials on the subject of the *śūdra* that are repeatedly called up in the seventeenth-century legal texts, thus giving their arguments several layers of historicity and creating an intertextual discourse between areas that we understand today as law, jurisprudence, philosophy, theology and politics. It was Pollock who pointed out that an entire corpus of *śūdradharmanibandha* texts was composed between the fourteenth and the seventeenth centuries (1993). My doctoral research consisted in finding, assembling, dating, reading, analyzing, and critiquing some of these texts and in reconstructing both the specific textual conversation and the larger historical moment in which they were embedded (Vajpeyi 2004). In this essay I focus on the prehistory of the *śūdra* debate of the late medieval period, to the extent that such a prehistory emerges from the *Śūdra* Archive itself.

Texts like Kamalākarabhaṭṭa's *Śūdrakamalākara* (Kamalākara on the *śūdras*), Śeṣakṛṣṇa's *Śūdrācāraśiromaṇi* (Summation of the Licit Behavior

of the *Śūdra*), and Gāgābhaṭṭa's *Śūdradharmodyota* (Light on *Śūdradharma*), besides many other texts of similar provenance, were written in Bengal, Mithila, Varanasi, and other parts of the Gangetic Plain and the Himalayan foothills between 1350 and 1700 CE. They tended to return to a few key moments in the discourse of *Pūrvamīmāṃsā*, *Upaniṣad* texts and their Vedāntic commentaries that first articulated the rather technical matter of *śūdra* identity as a problem with ethical dimensions, sociocultural meaning, and the literary qualities, alternately, of rage and pathos. Note how the paired modern political categories of low-caste subjectivity popularized in the twentieth century by, respectively, Ambedkar and Gandhi, namely, "Dalit" ("beaten down" or "crushed") and "Harijan" ("person dear to the Lord Himself" or "God's child") preserve these contrasting aesthetic flavors, and, more significantly, convey a sense of the ethical crisis precipitated by even the most rudimentary critique of the caste system.

Thus, in the otherwise dry purview of *dharmaśāstra*, and within that, the even more bloodless subgenre of *dharmanibandha*, the problem of the *śūdra* carries a peculiar charge. Normative abstraction and social experience are two sides of the coin of *varṇāśramadharma* (the *dharma* of the orders and life stages); this divide is sharpened in the figure of the *śūdra* to appear as the driest and most ritualistic norm of *dharma*, on the one hand, and the troubling experiential reality of disempowerment and humiliation on the other. The Sanskrit intellectuals of seventeenth-century Varanasi were not unaware of the two-faced nature of the categories of *varṇa* identity—the four hierarchical orders of classical *dharmaśāstra*—with which they were engaged. In calling up ancient, almost primordial narratives and fragments of argumentation concerned with the *śūdra*, authors like Kamalākara, Śeṣakṛṣṇa and Gāgā seem to remind us of the relationship between the ritual and the real. They also reiterate the importance of the topic of *śūdradharma* for the early modern period, when the political horizons of Gangetic and Deccani India were dominated by Muslim and low-caste—or *mleccha* (barbarian) and *śūdra*—rulers, whose power challenged and undermined the authority of Brahmin discourse on *varna*.[1]

There are four characters, two we may call properly literary and two generic, used by our late medieval authors to problematize what it means to be *śūdra*, whether in the world of abstract norms or in the world of human experiences. These characters are (1) Satyakāma Jābāla and (2) Jānaśruti Pautrāyaṇa, both taken from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, as well as (3) *niṣādasthapati* (the king of the *niṣāda* tribe) and (4) *rathakāra* (the chariot maker), both taken from the *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā Sūtra* and Śabara's commentary on it. The locus classicus

where these four figures meet is a section titled "*Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa*" in the *Brahmasūtra* and Śaṅkara's commentary on it. Accordingly our authors attend to this section with some care. In this essay I will discuss only Satyakāma and Jānaśruti.[2]

Let us think of the *Upaniṣad* texts, the *Mānavadharmaśāstra* (The Laws of Manu), *Pūrva-* and *Uttara-mīmāṃsā*, the *advaita* (nondualist) and *dvaita* (dualist) schools with their commentarial literature, and finally the *śūdradharma* digests, all as constituting a chain, stretching out over a thousand to fifteen hundred years of more or less continuous discussion about both the normative and the experiential aspects of *varṇa* identity. There are of course hundreds of topics raised within this textual tradition, but for our particular *nibandha* writers of early modernity, such as Kamalākara and his cohort, the *śūdra* is the relevant thread that they must pick out. This could be partly because political realities in the seventeenth century were standing the *varṇāśramavyavasthā* (the hierarchical arrangement of orders and life stages) on its head; partly there may be a logic and dynamic that is internal to the totality of Sanskrit discourse, resulting in a reconsideration and reiteration of the lowliness of the *śūdra* at this moment in the evolution of that entire world of theory, practice, and belief. To make the latter claim, however, we would need to understand much better the late career of Sanskrit discourse. In his recent magnum opus, Pollock has taken a huge step forward in presenting what is known about and what can be said of Sanskrit throughout premodernity; our understanding of what was happening to and in this discursive universe between the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries is still a moving frontier (2006). In this essay I will read in detail the *Upaniṣad*, *mīmāṃsā* and *vedānta* literature referenced by our authors during the seventeenth century in their reprisal of an old and ongoing debate to address their chosen questions: Who is a *śūdra* and what is his *dharma* (Dadaji 1880; Kaviraj and Khiste 1933, 1936; Viśveśvara-"Gāgā"-bhaṭṭa)?

Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa

"*Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa*" is the title given to subsection (*adhikaraṇa*) 9, comprising *sūtra*-s 34–38, of section (*pāda*) 3 of chapter (*adhyāya*) 1 of the *Brahmasūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa.[3] The title literally means "subsection about making an exception of the *śūdra*." The exception in question is from access to Vedic knowledge. In other words, this portion of the *Brahmasūtra* establishes that the *śūdra* is not qualified to know the Veda. The subsection immediately preceding this one (i.e., *adhikaraṇa* 8) discusses the qualification of the gods for such knowledge. If the gods, as well as men of the first three *varṇa*-s, all have access to Veda, this

leaves only one exception in the world of intelligent life forms: a man belonging to the fourth and last *varṇa*, namely, the *śūdra*. (That women and outcastes are excluded goes without saying.) According to Śaṅkara's decipherment of the relevant *sūtra*-s, they refer to two stories embedded within the fourth chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*: one the story of Jānaśruti Pautrāyaṇa, the other the story of Satyakāma Jābāla. In both cases it appears at first that the protagonist is a *śūdra*, and yet by the end of the narrative he turns out to have access to Vedic knowledge. In his commentary Śaṅkara carefully examines these stories and their main characters. He tries to establish that neither Jānaśruti nor Satyakāma is a *śūdra* and that the *śūdra*'s exception, therefore, stands.

Why should we take any note of the *Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa*, seeing as it is merely a sequence of five aphoristic *sūtra-s*?[4] For one thing, it deserves attention because it is a statement about the *śūdra* coming, for a change, from outside both the *dharmaśāstra* proper and the other *smṛti* literature, like the epics and the *Purāṇa*-s. It is as natural for our *śūdradharma* authors as it was for Ambedkar in his Orientalist mode, to quote Manu and Yājñavalkya, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Ṛg Veda*, as well as older *nibandha* writers like Hemādri. If we think of the study of the *śūdra* as a discipline in itself, then those are the proper textual sources that help constitute it as such. It is much more unusual to place a story from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* or a commentarial exercise by Śaṅkara within this disciplinary context. Then, the *Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa* is located inside the foundational text of *vedānta*, arguably the most salient school of classical Indian philosophy at the present time. Finally, within the purview of *vedānta*, the topic of the *śūdra*'s lack of qualification to know the Veda is something of an oddity, since the matter of propriety with respect to and preparedness for Vedic knowledge is already extensively dealt with in the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā*.

Pūrva- and *Uttara-mīmāṃsā* are complementary systems; they complete one another rather than overlap (Pollock 2004). The former is supposed to deal with the concrete aspects of the Veda, its text and practice, while the latter covers its abstract and salvific meaning. The intellectual, ritual, and spiritual qualifications of any aspiring student of the Veda are treated in the opening chapter of Jaimini's *Mīmāmsāsūtra* along with Śabara's *bhāṣya*. This text also has its own *Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa* (1:7:25–38). Why should there be, then, a residue of doubt regarding the *śūdra*'s disqualification from Vedic knowledge that the *Brahmasūtra* voices and Śaṅkara must settle? Why should a text about the nature of the Ultimate Reality stray into so particular a social matter? Śaṅkara himself calls the *Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa* an "adventitious discussion" (*prāsaṅgika vicāra*) on the subject of the *śūdra*'s "qualification" (*adhikāra*)

to know the Veda, or rather, the lack thereof. But just because he may regard it as a digression does not mean he can either delete it from the *Brahmasūtra* altogether or fail to comment on it. It is, however, his commentary that reads *varṇa* status so strongly into the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*'s use of the category "*śūdra*," which use is ostensibly (again, on Śaṅkara's reading) what the *Brahmasūtra* 1:3:9: 34–38 invokes.[5]

Texts under Analysis

Moreover, following Śaṅkara, the two other most significant of the *Brahmasūtra*'s major commentators, Rāmānuja (mid–twelfth century) and Madhva (mid–thirteenth century), also elaborated on the *Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa*. We will therefore attend to the *Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa* along with the commentaries of the three *ācārya*-s, namely, the *Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya*, the *Śrībhāṣya* or the *Śārīrakamīmāṃsābhāṣya* of Rāmānuja, and the *Brahmasūtramādhvabhāṣya*. We will return to the two stories in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* to which this subsection of the *Brahmasūtra* purportedly refers. It is only through an intertextual reading of this order that the discussion about the *śūdra* at an important discursive site in the Sanskrit philosophical literature can be illuminated.

In the *dharmanibandha* corpus under consideration, Śeṣakṛṣṇa's *Śūdrācāraśiromaṇi* and Kamalākarabhaṭṭa's *Śūdrakamalākara* both refer to the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*'s sixth *adhyāya* (which is the chapter containing subsections on the *rathakāra* and the *niṣādasthapati*). They also refer to its first *adhyāya* (which deals exhaustively with the prerequisites of Vedic study) and to its second *adhyāya* (which contains many of the injunctions about who gets the *upanayana*—the "second birth" of Vedic initiation—and who gets the sacrificial fire, at what time of year, and at what age). Our authors cite Śaṅkara as an authority on the lack of entitlement (*anadhikāra*) on the part of the *śūdra* for Vedic ritual as well as Vedic knowledge. In his book *Who Were the Shudras? How They Came to be the Fourth Varṇa in the Indo-Aryan Society*, Ambedkar directs our attention to the figures of Jānaśruti Pautrāyaṇa and Satyakāma Jābāla (1946: 102, 175). These references may be fleeting. However, the fact remains that the late medieval authors on *śūdradharma*, as well as the greatest modern Indian theorist of social inequality, Ambedkar, return to the same sources in their attempts to problematize *śūdra* identity afresh and understand it in a deeper historical perspective.

What makes these fragments interesting, therefore, is that they are repeatedly called up at different moments, by different authors, for different reasons. Śeṣakṛṣṇa, Kamalākara, and Gāgābhaṭṭa in the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries, and Ambedkar in the twentieth, obviously have not just dissimilar but opposing motives in recalling the ancient texts. For the former, they establish the trans-temporal stability and authority of *varṇa* theory; for the latter, they demonstrate the long-standing evil of Brahmanical ideology about social hierarchy. In rereading the same texts yet again, we do not share either of these agendas exactly. Rather, it is the very recuperation and recirculation of these texts within the ongoing debate about the *śūdra* over the last four or five hundred years that makes them worthy of our attention.

Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa: The Argument

The main point being made in the five *sūtra-s* of the *Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa* with Śaṅkara's commentary is that the *śūdra* is not qualified to access Vedic knowledge. The fundamental reason for this is that he is not entitled to the ritual of second birth (*upanayana*). *Upanayana* is open only to someone born into one of the first three *varṇa*-s—it is precisely what makes him a full-fledged member of his *varṇa*—and not to the *śūdra*. Without undergoing this ritual, no one can make a formal study (*adhyayana*) of the Veda; without such study, a person has no competency (*sāmarthya*) to know its meaning. The desire to know this meaning (*arthitvam*) has no relevance—a *śūdra* cannot access Veda merely because of his curiosity. The fact that the *śūdra* is not permitted to perform Vedic rituals stems from the rule that prevents him from studying and understanding the Veda. The *śūdra* may not make any sort of claim to Vedic knowledge, however limited; consequently he may not engage in the practices associated with the Veda. Should a *śūdra* misunderstand the limits of his qualifications (*adhikāra*), or rather, should he fail to grasp his lack of qualification (*anadhikāra*) vis-à-vis knowledge of the Veda, the authoritative texts (*smṛti*) are unequivocal in stating the punishments that he must suffer. Just in case we cannot recall the exact textual passages being referred to here, Śaṅkara helpfully quotes them for us.[6]

The above argument is no way novel. It is a position dispersed throughout the Sanskrit literature on *dharma*, across genres. What is new, however, is the concern (in these *sūtras* and Śaṅkara's gloss on them) to explain two seeming exceptions mentioned in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. One of these is of Jānaśruti Pautrāyaṇa, a *śūdra* king who is given a particular sort of Vedic instruction (*saṃvarga vidyā*) by a *brāhmaṇa* sage, Raikva. The other is of Satyakāma Jābāla, a *śūdra* boy who is also accepted for Vedic tuition, this time by another *brāhmaṇa* teacher, Hāridrumata Gautama. What does it mean to have a *śūdra* king? How does he get access to Vedic knowledge? Why is a boy whose birth is at best uncertain and at worst in the *śūdra*

varṇa, accepted into a Vedic school? These two narratives are troubling to the author of the *Brahmasūtra*, but even more so to Śaṅkara. Since the word *śūdra*, qualifying both Jānaśruti and Satyakāma, cannot be excised from the *Upaniṣad* text, it is sought to be etymologically deconstructed to mean something other than "once-born person, member of the fourth (and last) *varṇa*," or shown to be inapplicable to either of these characters.[7] We need to turn to the stories in question in order to follow how and why they are taken apart in the root text as well as in the commentaries.

The Story of Jānaśruti Pautrāyaṇa (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4:1:1–8; 4:2:1–5)

Jānaśruti Pautrāyaṇa was a pious lord. He gave much food to the hungry and many gifts to the needy. He built dining halls in every corner of his kingdom, for all to come and eat their fill.

One night, as Jānaśruti lay resting under the stars, two geese were winging their way through the darkness above him.

One bird said to the other: "O Sharp-Eyed One! Do you not see the shining king Jānaśruti asleep below you? Don't go too close lest his aura, burning bright like the daytime sky, singe your delicate feathers!"

His companion responded: "Are you telling me, my friend, there is a being whose radiance rivals that of Raikva, the sage who makes his humble home beneath a cart?"

"Raikva? And who might that be?" asked the first bird.

The other answered: "The fruit of everyone's good deeds accrues to Raikva, just as the winner takes all in a game of dice. If someone could know what Raikva knows, all good things would go to that person too."

Lying on his bed, watching the white birds glide through the night air, listening to their words, Jānaśruti felt a stab of self-doubt.

Next morning, when his bard began to recite a eulogy as usual, he was troubled once again: Was he not truly deserving of praise? Was there someone whose glory rivaled his own? Who was this Raikva, whose fame was abroad in the land? What precious knowledge did he possess, that brought him everything worth having?

He sent out his personal attendant to look high and low for a man living underneath a cart. Such a person was not in evidence anywhere. "Search for him where a *brāhmaṇa* is most likely to be!" ordered Jānaśruti, dispatching his attendant once more.[8] Raikva was found at last, crouching beneath a cart,

scratching his itches.

Jānaśruti prepared to approach him. As was his custom, he took with him many gifts. "Accept these offerings, O Sage," he said, "and tell me: Who is the deity whom you worship?"

Raikva answered: "Take away these garlands, chariots and cows, O *Śūdra*, keep them with you!"

Jānaśruti came away, but returned with even more presents, and this time brought along his daughter as well. He said: "Do accept all these gifts, and take my daughter's hand. Moreover, O Wise One, let the village in which you dwell be named after you. But instruct me, please, on the subject of your chosen deity."

Looking carefully at the girl's face, Raikva replied: "Let these gifts be the mouth through which I address you. O *Śūdra*, now I will impart to you the instruction you have asked for."

Sūtra 34, with the extreme brevity characteristic of the very form of the *sūtra*, mentions two things: one, grief (*śuc, śoka*) that arises from hearing an insulting reference (*anādaraśravaṇa*), and two, running or falling (*ādravaṇa*).

śug asya tadanādaraśravaṇāt tadādravaṇāt sūcyate hi (34)

The three *ācārya-s* unpack this cryptic formulation to arrive at a new etymology for the word "*śūdra.*" Two elements, one denoting "grief" and the other "running/falling", are grammatically transformed to combine as follows.

In Śaṅkara's Reading

(1) The *śūdra* is one who runs about on account of his grief, that is, one who is impelled by grief (*śucā abhidudruve*).

(2) The *śūdra* is one who goes to grief, one who is precipitated into sorrow (*śucam abhidudrāva*).[9]

(3) In this particular case, the *śūdra* is Jānaśruti, who runs to Raikva on account of his grief (*śucā Raikvam abhidudrāva*).

In Rāmānuja's Reading

The *śūdra* is one who grieves. "*śocati iti śūdraḥ*": When *śuc* takes the suffix *rk*, as per the *Uṇādi sūtra*-s, the *c* of *śuc* goes to *d* and its *u* is lengthened to *ū*, while *rk* loses its *k* and takes on an *a*. So *śuc* + *rk* = *śūdra*. Here, the *śūdra* is Jānaśruti because of his state of being a bearer of grief (*śocitṛtvam*).

In Madhva's Reading

Madhva concurs with the two *ācārya*-s preceding him and adds that Jānaśruti's unhappiness is further indexed by his agitation the next morning, when he sends his attendant to look for Raikva.

These derivations provide striking descriptions of Jānaśruti. One night the king overhears a conversation between two voices and is pained by the insult to him implied in their comparative glorification of some *brāhmaṇa* called Raikva, of whom he has never heard. When his bard sings praises of him as usual the next morning, Jānaśruti imagines that he is being mocked, that the disparagement of the previous night is, in a sense, continuing. Stung, he hurries to Raikva. He wants what Raikva has—in this case, Vedic knowledge—and is willing to pay a price for it. Raikva sees him and immediately calls him a *śūdra*.[10] Why? Śaṅkara says it is because Raikva is so wise that he intuitively grasps Jānaśruti's anxiety beneath the veneer of generosity. He perceives that it is the king's agitation that has brought him there in a hurry, laden with gifts, and he names this agitation in his very mode of address: O *Śūdra*!

So, the commentators say, when Raikva agrees to impart the particular Vedic instruction in which he specializes (*saṃvarga vidyā*) to Jānaśruti, we should not conclude that the *brāhmaṇa* has agreed to teach Veda to someone who is *literally* a *śūdra*. The term *śūdra* captures Jānaśruti's state of mind and his motivation, not his *varṇa* status. He is a king, he is wealthy and generous, and he has a bard and an attendant—how could he be a *śūdra*? Moreover, in the very next section of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, another pair of characters is mentioned, Caitraratha Abhipratārī and Śaunaka Kāpeya. The one is a *kṣatriya* and the other a *brāhmaṇa*; by analogy and textual proximity, Jānaśruti Pautrāyaṇa must be the *kṣatriya* to Raikva the *brāhmaṇa*. And should we *still* be doubtful, we need to recall various *smṛti* statements debarring a *śūdra* from Vedic knowledge: "If he hears the word of the Veda, let his ears be filled with molten tin and lac." "If he utters the word of the Veda, let his tongue be cut out. If he tries to learn the word of the Veda, let him be put to death." (These injunctions come from the *Gautama Smṛti*.) "The *śūdra* is born of Puruṣa's feet, he is as polluted as a cemetery—let no one study Veda in his vicinity." (This is a quotation from the *Vāsiṣṭha Saṃhitā*.) "The *śūdra* does not deserve knowledge." (This is a line from the *Manusmṛti*.) "The *śūdra* is so much like an animal that he does not deserve to perform Vedic rituals."

Śaṅkara's interpretation of Jānaśruti's mental state is certainly viable. The story is clear in revealing Jānaśruti's perturbation when he overhears the two birds. It's also fair to say that it is because he feels upset that he

goes to Raikva, and that he goes to him quickly, as soon as he is able to find him. One might just as well say that a situation, one that causes Jānaśruti to be unhappy, befalls him, and that his unhappiness drives him to further action: seeking out Raikva, going to him, asking him for tuition, persuading him with gifts. Thus the etymological explanation for the word *śūdra* is not entirely baseless. It is also possible—although I find this interpretative move somewhat unconvincing—to impute to Raikva the insight that would allow him to detect the king's true feelings, as well as the lack of tact that would make him say it out loud. But there are other signs right there in the text of the *Upaniṣad* that Śaṅkara and the commentators after him ignore. I would draw attention to these.

In the end, Jānaśruti succeeds in bribing Raikva. When the *brāhmaṇa* rejects one set of gifts—cows, garlands, chariots—Jānaśruti returns with more of the same, a land grant ("Let the village in which you dwell be named after you!") and also his daughter. This time Raikva capitulates. "Let these gifts be the mouth through which I address you," he says, all the time looking at the girl. In other words, the gifts, especially that of the young virgin, open up a channel of communication through which Vedic knowledge may be conveyed from Raikva to Jānaśruti. Raikva's home is his cart; when he is first encountered, he is sitting below it, scratching his itches. He is rude to the king; he rejects his offerings. Only when a sexual favor is held out does the mangy old *brāhmaṇa* give in, even then with bad grace. The bribe—the sexual bribe at that—is the only opening through which knowledge of the Veda will flow from the *brāhmaṇa* to the *śūdra*. We might even go so far as to conclude that there is a quid pro quo effected here between Raikva and Jānaśruti: carnal knowledge in exchange for Vedic knowledge.

Moreover, let us observe the two geese, strange figures that they are, more carefully. They are really two wise men in the guise of birds, says Rāmānuja, and their purpose is to alert the king to the fact that he needs to expand his knowledge. "*Bhallākṣa*! *Bhallākṣa*!"—this is how one bird calls out to the other. *Bhallākṣa* has two mutually opposed meanings. Either it is "myopic" or "one whose vision (*akṣa* = eye) is sharp as the tip of a spear/an arrow (*bhalla*)." What is the bird called on to detect in the landscape below, with its faulty/acute vision?[11] It is the sleeping king, of course. The king's reputation for generosity and piety is well established, so much so that it attaches to him like a visible aura. His wealth and virtue are described as radiance emanating from him. Since his charisma is palpable, visible—indeed, the bird cautions its companion that Jānaśruti's light (*jyotiḥ*) might singe its feathers, like hot daylight that fills the sky—what is it about the king that poor eyesight, or

even an arrow-sharp gaze, is missing? I would suggest that what it is easy not to see about him, what gets masked by his blinding brilliance, as it were, is the fact that he is a *śūdra*. Since he is practically luminous with power, his low *varṇa* status is obscured even to the most discerning eye.

Jānaśruti is precisely who Śaṅkara denies he is: a *śūdra* king. He may have servants to order about and land to give away, he may build dining halls and feed the poor, he may have bards recite his praises and no rival to challenge his glory, but he is a *śūdra*. *This* hidden but undeniable fact about the king is what Raikva won't let go of, until he has been sufficiently bribed. *This* identity is what presents an obstacle to Jānaśruti gaining Vedic instruction. *This* is the truth he must overcome—by silencing the *brāhmaṇa* teacher's protest with more than enough gifts—before he can get the *saṃvarga vidyā*. Śaṅkara cannot get around this except by claiming that the word *śūdra* doesn't mean *śūdra*, and that a king, any king, is by definition a *kṣatriya*.[12] To prove this latter point Śaṅkara has to go outside of the story at hand, to the next passage in the *Upaniṣad*, where an unrelated *kṣatriya*, Caitraratha Abhipratārī, is mentioned. This other character is a *kṣatriya*, Śaṅkara weakly argues, so Jānaśruti Pautrāyaṇa must be one too. None of this seems to be very convincing evidence. The king may well be feeling insulted, he may be aggrieved, his agitation may be driving him to the very person who threatens him, but he is no *kṣatriya*. Note that he is never once called a *kṣatriya* in the story by any of the other characters that talk to or about him.

The issue here is really one of recognition. One bird asks the other to recognize Jānaśruti for who he is. The second bird, despite vision so acute that it is called "Sharp-eyed One," cannot see properly because the sleeping figure below it is literally aglow with charisma. It cannot recognize the king as a *śūdra*. Raikva, on the other hand, does recognize him and instantly names that which he accurately perceives about the king: "O *Śūdra*!" Śaṅkara may be right that Raikva recognizes something about Jānaśruti. I would argue, however, that what he recognizes is not the king's feeling of grief (*śoka*), which then leads, by a convoluted and forced etymology, to the address "*Śūdra*!" (*śucā śucaṃ prati vā ādravaṇāt śūdra iti*, "He is called *śūdra* since he hastens either because of sorrow, or towards it"). Rather, what he recognizes is the king's true *varṇa* identity, which is that of a *śūdra*. When Jānaśruti comes back, *again* Raikva calls it as he sees it: "O *Śūdra*!" Only this time, in exchange for presents (particularly a young woman—a gift that an itchy old man like him with no home and no possessions is never again likely to be offered), he is willing to ignore the fact and get on with teaching the Veda.

The Story of Satyakāma Jābāla (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4:4:1-5)

Satyakāma Jābāla was a young boy. He wanted to take the vows of celibacy to begin his period of formal study. He knew he would have to introduce himself to a teacher of the Veda, and present his qualifications. So he asked his mother Jabalā: "What is my *gotra*?"

His mother replied: "I can't say, Son. In my youth, before you were born, I served many men. I can no longer recall your father or his lineage. My name is Jabalā, your name is Satyakāma; you are my son, so you are Satyakāma Jābāla."

Satyakāma went to the hermitage of Hāridrumata Gautama.

"Take me as your student, Great Master!" he said.

"What is your *gotra*?" Gautama asked.

"I'm sorry, Sir, but I don't know my *gotra*," Satyakāma replied. He then repeated what his mother had told him. "I am Satyakāma Jābāla," he said.

Gautama said, at length:

"If you were not a *brāhmaṇa* you would have not have spoken thus. You have not forsaken the truth. Go and get sticks for a fire, Son. I will invest you with the sacred thread and perform your initiation."

After his *upanayana*, Gautama gave Satyakāma a herd of cattle to tend.

"I'll come back to your hermitage once the animals have multiplied," said the boy. Thus he passed many years, tending the cattle, until his herd had grown to a thousand heads.

As we can see, the story of Satyakāma Jābāla also hinges on recognition. We know that a *śūdra* may not study the Veda because he is not entitled to the ritual of initiation and second birth, which is the prerequisite of Vedic study, namely, the *upanayana*, explains Śaṅkara. Hāridrumata Gautama admits Satyakāma Jābāla into his hermitage and initiates him only after he has determined that the boy is not a *śūdra*. How does the teacher know this? He claims he knows because the boy speaks the truth—truthfulness reveals him to be a *brāhmaṇa*. Only in the absence (*abhāva*) of the property of being a *śūdra* (*śūdratvam*) can Gautama proceed with the *upanayana*, thus clearing the way for Satyakāma's Vedic study.

The problem in this story is again that of recognizing the protagonist. First he seeks to recognize himself. He realizes that as an unknown quantity he will not be admitted to a Vedic school. He therefore asks his mother about his

absent father. The mother however, cannot provide a real answer: in a sense, she doesn't know what the boy's identity is in patriarchal caste society because she doesn't know who his father was. She has to give him her own name, and so he carries the matronymic "Jābāla." Next, Gautama must correctly recognize this boy. He cannot tell, just by looking at him or even hearing his name, who he is. For Satyakāma mere self-presentation does not result in being recognized. Gautama asks him, "What is your *gotra*?" Satyakāma repeats to Gautama what his mother had said to him: nobody knows. At this point, since the boy's narrative about his origins is unhelpful in determining his *varṇa*, and his name is equally unhelpful in identifying him, the teacher makes a judgment call. He says, "You abide by the truth, ergo you must be a *brāhmaṇa*." And on these grounds he admits Satyakāma as his student.

Where in the literature is "adherence to the truth" specified as a test for being *brāhmaṇa* or non-*brāhmaṇa*? In fact if anything, in our *śūdradharma* texts, truthfulness (*satya*) is one of the qualities listed under the kind of *dharma* that is common to all four *varṇa-s* (*sāmānyadharma*), and therefore it loses any efficacy as an identifying mark for one or other *varṇa* in particular. Moreover, is a woman not the equivalent of a *śūdra*? (The principle of *strī-śūdra* equivalence and parity, *samānatā*, is upheld in all the *dharmanibandha* texts [see Vajpeyi 2004: ch. 2]). If a child carries his mother's name, doesn't that make him a *śūdra*? Especially in this case, where Jabalā clearly describes her youth as having been spent serving—that is, servicing—men, what is the likelihood that a son of such a mother would be treated as anything other than a *śūdra* or possibly even lower than a *śūdra*? Isn't the child born out of wedlock, the son of an unwed mother, by very definition a *śūdrasamāna*? It seems that Gautama does not recognize Satyakāma but instead deliberately *mis*recognizes him.

It is the case that he wants to take the boy as his student and therefore arbitrarily declares him to be a *brāhmaṇa*, rather than it being the case that the boy is a *brāhmaṇa* and therefore Gautama must let him into the hermitage. What Gautama is doing is admitting someone who under the theory of *varṇa* cannot be anything but a *śūdra*, and then justifying his act by claiming that the boy's honesty is an identifying mark, a sign that makes up for the absence of a name. In effect he concludes that Satyakāma is a *brāhmaṇa*, not because of or based on what the boy says but despite or against his testimony. It is almost as though Gautama does not hear what Satyakāma narrates. The teacher refuses to give recognition to the *śūdra* standing before him in the flesh and instead gives recognition to a nonexistent, or at least nonpresent, *brāhmaṇa* who he makes up as the imagined applicant asking for admission. The story thus

depicts a *śūdra*, willfully misrecognized as a *brāhmaṇa*, getting an *upanayana*.

Śaṅkara and other commentators cannot but fall all over themselves trying to explain this strange circumstance. What they end up with is two sets of paired circular propositions: (1) Satyakāma spoke the truth because he was a *brāhmaṇa*, and Gautama knew him to be a *brāhmaṇa* because he spoke the truth; and (2) Gautama accepted Satyakāma as a student because he was a *brāhmaṇa*, and Satyakāma must have been a *brāhmaṇa* because Gautama accepted him as a student. The character Satyakāma is thus as much of a challenge to the ingenuity of the *ācārya-s* as was the character Jānaśruti, for both are *śūdra* students of the Veda, albeit one is a mere boy, while the other is a king. The characters of Raikva and Hāridrumata Gautama are equally difficult. The one is a corrupt *brāhmaṇa*, vulnerable to bribes—and he is lascivious, too, given the nature of the bribe that he finally accepts. The other is a whimsical *brāhmaṇa*, making up his own rules about who is allowed to study the Veda, admitting students at will.

Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa v Chāndogya Upaniṣad

The sub-section of the *Brahmasūtra* under analysis has to interpret two highly ambiguous stories from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* and somehow bring them in line with a certain ideology of the relationship between *varṇa* status and knowledge of the Veda that decidedly excludes the *śūdra* from Vedic practice and study. But these stories are resistant to the import of the *Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa*, not least because of the extreme brevity and highly elliptical nature of its *sūtra-s*. Śaṅkara therefore has to execute a strong reading of the *sūtra-s* in his commentary, and his successors follow suit. But even after the exegetic maneuvers of the commentators—all three of them are equally masters of the commentarial genre—the *Upaniṣad*'s meaning remains recalcitrant to their agenda of *śūdra* exclusion from Vedic knowledge. The point of both stories seems to be to raise the matter of identity as a question rather than reiterating a given position on the disqualification of the *śūdra* from access to the Veda. Needless to say, the early modern *nibandhakāra* authors simply reproduce the claims of Śaṅkara and company; they do not make an independent attempt to read these stories afresh.

Identity and recognition are two sides of the same coin, and we have seen how the two Upaniṣadic stories have the problem of recognition as their central theme. The bird must recognize Jānaśruti, as must Raikva. Satyakāma must recognize himself, and Gautama must recognize him. All these moments of encounter, of first seeing or sighting an unrecognizable, unidentified person, turn out to be unsuccessful—in every case, what occurs is a misrecognition.

As Śaṅkara sees it, the *śūdra* characters precisely must not be identified as such, and his argument is that this is because they *are not,* that is, *their identity is not, śūdra*. On Śaṅkara's view, in accordance with *varṇa* ideology, Jānaśruti *is* a *kṣatriya* king, Satyakāma *is* a *brāhmaṇa* student, and all is as should be in the safeguarded realm of Vedic knowledge. But this realm is highly contested, and its gates are left open by the very men who are supposed to guard them jealously, namely, the *brāhmaṇa*-s Raikva and Gautama. Those who are then able to enter are precisely those who were supposed to be kept out: the *śūdra* king, the *śūdra* student.

Last names have a great deal riding on them when it comes to social identification. This is clear in both stories and in the *Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa* too. Thus Jānaśruti Pautrāyaṇa's name is compared to that of one Caitraratha Abhipratārī, son of Kākṣasena, for purposes of testing his *kṣatriya varṇa*, and Satyakāma Jābāla's *gotra* is the very heart of the matter in his discussions with both his mother and his future teacher. However, the commentators of the *Brahmasūtra* pay no attention to the *first* names of our protagonists. I don't know if this is already a tradition in the commentarial literature on the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, but it is certainly very tempting to consider both names carefully.

Jānaśruti, the patronymic for a descendant of Janaśruti, means something like "common knowledge." What is it that is rumored across the land, heard and repeated by the common people? It is nothing other than what one bird reports to the other in a loud whisper, the very whisper that the king overhears: that Raikva's glory exceeds that of Jānaśruti. And why is this? It is because Raikva has the one thing that Jānaśruti, powerful though he may be, does not possess, namely, Vedic knowledge. And why does Raikva have, and Jānaśruti lack, Vedic knowledge? It is because one is a *brāhmaṇa* and the other is a *śūdra*. In other words, what the people hear said is that for all his wealth and power the king is, after all, a *śūdra*. When he, Jānaśruti, comes to know that his low *varṇa* identity constitutes common knowledge, he begins to feel anxious. It is then that he falls into a state of unhappiness (*śoka*) and begins his pursuit (*ādravaṇa*) of Raikva, both of which only confirm him to be, thanks to Śaṅkara's ingenious etymology, a *śūdra*. Surely his name is no accident?

Similar, arguably, is the case with Satyakāma, whose name means "one whose desire (*kāma*) is the truth (*satya*)." What is the truth that this boy desires? He desires the truth about himself. He wants to know who he is. He asks his mother this question, and is in turn asked the same question by his prospective teacher. But the truth is that he is a *śūdra*, and this is a truth that Gautama does not want to know. So he disregards it, and replaces it with a

fiction, the fiction of Satyakāma being a *brāhmaṇa*. "I am Satyakāma Jābāla," announces the boy, which is, for reasons already elaborated (primarily the use of the matronymic), tantamount to saying, "I am a *śūdra*."[13]

"You have not strayed from the truth (*na satyād agā iti*)," retorts Gautama, which is an accurate description of the boy's conduct, and, incidentally, also a gloss on Satyakāma's first name. But then, by pedagogic fiat, Gautama decides that this very truth that the boy abides by will be ignored and supplanted by a different statement, its exact opposite, and that he will be taken to be precisely who he is not, namely, a *brāhmaṇa*: "Bring the firewood, Son, I will initiate you," says Gautama. The truth of Satyakāma's name has forever been repressed, and later Śaṅkara will boldly cite this very story to prove that a *śūdra* can never be initiated into Vedic knowledge. Instead, I would argue that the *Upaniṣad* tells us this: a *śūdra* will be denied such an initiation only so long as he is identified as a *śūdra*. If his *śūdra* identity goes unrecognized, then, like Satyakāma, he might make it to Veda school after all.

Conclusion

The texts we have just reread in such detail are all very old, dating anywhere from 1,800 to 2,500 years before our time. It is some testimony to their ideological power that they were evoked repeatedly between the eighth and seventeenth centuries, recalled once more in the twentieth, and are yet again being called up, right here in my research. Indeed, I would contend that even when their many textual loci are forgotten, the figures of Jānaśruti and Satyakāma, and of the *rathakāra* and *niṣāda*, will continue to haunt modern understandings of caste and inform our everyday discourses about *śūdra* identity.

The link between the *śūdra* and *śoka*—grief, sorrow, or suffering—established in the *Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa* and cemented by Śaṅkara and his successors, is an abiding one in the Indian imagination of what is means to be of low *varṇa* status. Jānaśruti's sorrow has echoed down the ages as emblematic of the particular pain of those who D. R. Nagaraj referred to as "humiliated communities" (Nagaraj 1993). Ambedkar made light of this grammatical and semantic connection, ridiculing it as false etymology typical of twisted Brahmanical thinking, but the very term *Dalit* indexes something of the same predicament, connoting the state of being "crushed" or "ground down" by caste oppression. Jānaśruti is pained because he hears the insult to himself (*anādaraśravaṇāt*). What are the innumerable statements of contempt collected in the *śūdradharma* texts from the entire gamut of *dharma* literature, if not an insult to the *śūdra*, *anādara* itself, a denial of basic human dignity?

What *could* the hearing (*śravaṇa*) of these contempt-filled pronouncements produce, other than grief (*śoka*)? If the social consequence of a theoretical category like *śūdra* is humiliation, then its characteristic affect must be pain.[14]

Satyakāma, too, is a haunting figure. He is a person without a name, the son of a forgotten father, the bearer of a body without a thread. He desperately desires the truth of self-knowledge; he seeks self-recognition. Yet it is only on the condition of being denied his true identity that he is admitted into the institutions of upper-caste domination. "*Upa tvā neṣye*," says Gautama to him, "I will initiate you with a sacred thread," in a vivid and poignant moment of acceptance that is also the moment of denial. To enter the hermitage of the teacher of the Veda, Satyakāma must erase himself, his self, the very self he sought through his questions to his mother. His quest for the truth is inscribed into his name, and yet Gautama deliberately misreads his truth-seeking as a sign of his being other to himself, a *brāhmaṇa* instead of a *śūdra*. If he doesn't want to find himself excluded from Vedic knowledge, Satyakāma must accept self-annihilation. His is the oldest story of the token minority subject in a stronghold of elite privilege. We don't have to conjure up the social world of the *Upaniṣad-s* two millennia ago to be able to imagine exactly the nature of his pain.

Notes

The five *sūtra*-s of the *Apasūdrādhikaraṇa* of the *Brahmasūtra* are:

śug asya tadanādaraśravaṇāt tadādravaṇāt sūcyate hi (34)
kṣatriyatvagateś cottaratra caitrarathena liṅgāt (35)
saṃskāraparāmarśāt tadabhāvavilāpāc ca (36)
tadabhāvanirdhāraṇe ca pravṛtteḥ (37)
śravaṇādhyayanārthapratiṣedhāt smṛteś ca (38)

[1] Compare the essay by Knutson, in this volume, on the political and cultural crisis precipitated by the establishment of the Sultanate in early-thirteenth-century Bengal.

[2] This is for reasons of space and because their appearance as the protagonists of literary narratives makes them much more effective, as the vehicles of ideological contestation and thus as the carriers of cultural meaning, than disembodied generic entities like "the king of the *niṣāda* tribe" or "the chariot maker."

[3] All texts consulted in the subsequent readings are listed in the bibliography. Convenient English translations of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* are provided by Patrick Olivelle, Ganaganatha Jha, and Rajendra Lala Mitra, among others, of the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā sūtra* and *bhāṣya* by Ganganatha Jha and of the *Brahmasūtra* and *Śāṅkara bhāṣya* by V. M. Apte.

[4] These are spelled out at the end of the essay.

[5] I have devoted a considerable portion of my argument in Vajpeyi 2004 to restating and explaining the *anadhikāra* (absence of qualification) of the *śūdra* with respect to Vedic knowledge and Vedic ritual practice as laid out in the *Pūrvamīmāṃsāsūtra* and Śabara's *Bhāṣya*, and summarized by our authors (see ch. 2). The way in which our authors deploy the *Pūrvamīmāṃsāsūtra* and Śabara's *Bhāṣya* is quite similar to the way in which they deploy the *Brahmasūtra* and Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya*. They are more interested in cleaving to the authority of these weighty texts than in critiquing their positions or rethinking their assumptions.

[6] Ambedkar 1946 collects a whole litany of anti-*śūdra* statements found in the Brahmanical literature (ch. 3, 42–55).

[7] The qualifier *śūdra* attaches only to Jānaśruti; in Satyakāma's case, it hovers over the story at all times but is never actually used. The term used instead is *abrāhmaṇa* (not *brāhmaṇa*).

[8] In Patrick Olivelle's translation, this line reads: "Jānaśruti told him: 'Look for him, my man, in a place where one would search for a non-Brahmin.'" Olivelle's reading is the *lectio difficilior* of the Sanskrit materials: "*yatrāre ' brāhmaṇasyānveṣaṇā tad enam arccheti*" (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 4.1.7). The implication is not that Raikva is not a Brahmin but that his poverty (he lives beneath a cart, his body is covered with sores) sets him apart from other Brahmins. Wendy Doniger accepts Olivelle's reading, which, however, is not the text read by Śaṅkara, as is evident from his gloss (*are*

yatra brāhmaṇasya brahmavida). Olivelle refers to Raikva as "the gatherer"; Doniger calls him a "gleaner." In other words, he is a poor Brahmin, lacking possessions, one who lives by gleaning or gathering food and other necessities, not one who is used to receiving gifts. (Olivelle 1998: 216–17; Doniger 2009: 182–84). His poverty would make Jānaśruti's gifts/bribes attractive to Raikva. If we accept this line of argument, then the story becomes even more interesting from the point of view of the problem of *śūdra* identity: Jānaśruti doesn't think that Raikva is like a proper Brahmin (because he is to be found among non-Brahmins), and Raikva doesn't think that Jānaśruti is like a proper *kṣatriya* (because he is beholden to others, like Raikva himself, for what he really values, like Raikva's *saṃvarga vidyā*).

[9] In another commentary not treated here, we find the derivation of Rudra, an ancient name for the Hindu god Śiva: *rujam drāvayati iti rudraḥ* (the one who banishes illness is Rudra). So *śūdra*: *śucam drāvayati iti śūdraḥ*, that is, *rudra*, is to illness as *śūdra* is to sorrow. This etymology for *śūdra* would contradict the semantics we are after. A traditional derivation or folk etymology of the word cited to me by pandits in Karnataka and Maharashtra with whom I read during 2000–2002 runs as follows: *śrutāt dūraḥ iti śūdraḥ*—one who is far from *śruti* (i.e., the Veda)—is a *śūdra*. Jānaśruti is eventually *not* kept at a distance from Vedic learning.

[10] *tam u ha paraḥ praty uvācāha hāretvā śūdra tavaiva saha gobhir astv iti* (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 4.2.3).

[11] This is a minor point, but if we take the primary meaning of *bhallākṣa* to be "myopic," and the secondary meaning to be "sharp-sighted," then in the punning use of this name we may detect a sarcastic note. It is as though one bird is saying to the other, "Are you blind? Can you not *see*, Sharp Eyes, that the person sleeping over there is Jānaśruti?"

[12] Ambedkar scoffs at the etymological move of the commentator(s), calling it "too silly for words." He continues, "The Brahmanic writers excel everybody in the art of inventing false etymologies. There is no word for which they will not design some sort of etymology. . . . [The] attempt of the Vedanta Sutra . . . to make the word Shudra a derivative word suggesting that it meant a 'sorrowful people' [is] . . .absurd and senseless" (1946: 102).

[13] The exchange between Satyakāma and Gautama deserves to be quoted *in extenso*, but here is the key section: *so'haṃ satyakāmo jābālo'smi bho | iti taṃ hovāca | naitad abrāhmaṇo vivaktum arhati | samidhaṃ somyāharopa tvā neṣye na satyād agā iti* (4:4:4 and 5).

[14] Following Ambedkar, the Dalit Movement, particularly Dalit literature, throughout the history of independent India has tried to define the characteristic affect of the state of being outcaste as "anger," an assertive and rebellious emotion compared to the much more resigned and docile "sorrow." The idea has been to fuel social change with the energy of this anger, rather than accepting social hierarchy with the passivity of sorrow.

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16

This Noble Science: Indo-Persian Comparative Philology, c. 1000–1800 CE

Rajeev Kinra

[P]hilology may be seen as the critical self-reflection of language . . . the language of the book of humanity . . . as global as textualized language itself.

— Sheldon Pollock (2009)

Who Cares Who "Invented" Comparative Philology?

In most intellectual circles it is taken as virtually axiomatic, even today, that the science of comparative linguistics has been a modern(ist), uniquely Western discipline. Many recent academics have taken their cue in this regard from Michel Foucault, who traced the origins of the discipline to the great German linguist Franz Bopp's *Conjugationssystem der Sanskritsprache* (1816), while others will insist that Bopp himself was merely systematizing observations that had already been advanced by Sir William Jones, the celebrated East India Company magistrate, orientalist, and doyen of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, several decades earlier.[1] Jones's "great discovery" (Schwab 1984: 40–41) of the deep linguistic relationship among Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, and Latin is widely considered to have been a kind of "Copernican" moment in the onset of European intellectual modernity, not only for the study of comparative linguistics, but also for the study of comparative religions, the discipline of history (cf. the title of Kejariwal 1995), and the human and social sciences generally.[2]

Of course, as Sheldon Pollock has recently reiterated (2009: 938–39), many scholars of Indo-Persian cultural history have known all along that for all his brilliance Jones was not the first to postulate such a deep linguistic concomitance among Sanskrit, Persian, and other related languages. That credit should probably go to the North Indian intellectual luminary Sirāj al-Dīn ʿAlī Khān Ārzū (1687–1756), whose numerous works of comparative

philological scholarship (about which more below) were both celebrated and hotly contested among Indo-Persian literati throughout the latter part of the eighteenth century, and would surely have been known to most of Jones's Persian-language tutors, if not directly to Jones himself. By now, in fact, Ārzū's "scoop" of William Jones is probably old news even to general South Asianists, having been convincingly demonstrated over a decade ago in a widely read *Modern Asian Studies* article by Muzaffar Alam (1998: 336–42, see also Alam 2003: 182–5), and further contextualized in more recent work by Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi (2001a; 2001b; 2003) and Kapil Raj (2007).

Despite this strong circumstantial case, well known among specialists, that some form of Jones's revolutionary thesis has its provenance with the likes of Ārzū, the notion persists—certainly in Europe and America, but also even among many of our most sophisticated postcolonial theorists—that it took Europeans like Jones to come along and produce, import, and impose a rational evidentiary regime that was somehow uniquely European in its scientificity, and thus entirely alien to the "traditional" South Asian episteme(s) it encountered colonially; that Europeans alone "invented" modern new disciplines like comparative linguistics, comparative religions, and the like; and that they brought with them fully formed tools of method and discourse that allowed them, and them alone, to "discover" and synthesize so many previously undisclosed truths about the world, such as the linguistic diffusion thesis. Indeed, in this particular case, through a perverse form of supply-side epistemology, the heroic myth of Jones the European scholar going to Calcutta to found a discipline has even trickled down, once again, for a whole new mass global audience through the teachings of Michael Wood's lavish and wildly popular documentary for the BBC (2007) and PBS (2009), *The Story of India*.[3]

Critiquing these entrenched master narratives of heroic European scholarly discovery is not, however, simply a matter of pointing out that sometimes people like Ārzū got there first; or, say, that Jones learned many of his "modern" techniques of analyzing language on the basis of segmental morphemes from people like his Sanskrit tutor Ramlochan (Raj 2007: 95–96); or that his celebrated *Grammar of the Persian Language* (1771)—a work that was almost immediately hailed as a landmark of philological originality, was quickly translated into French (1772) and German (1773) and became such a widely disseminated "academic best-seller" (Tavakoli-Targhi 2001b: 276) that it was already in its ninth edition by 1829 (Trautmann 1997: 31)—was largely based on grammatical principles found in *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* (1608), a work of Mughal philology that predated even Ārzū, the finer points of which

were explained to Jones while still at Oxford by a visiting Bengali *munshī* named I'tisām al-Dīn.[4] One doesn't want to slip into pointless nativism, after all, much less start wallowing in the infinite regress of looking for modernity's precursors (however one defines modernity) in all the wrong places. Besides, these things already *have* been pointed out, repeatedly so.

What is now needed, and what Sheldon Pollock has consistently argued for in recent years, is not simply a token acknowledgment that South Asian and other colonized intellectuals had a say in modern disciplines, or even that the colonial encounter was constitutive of modernity itself—we already know this. Rather, the moment calls for a renewed, sustained attention to the depth, richness, and complex disciplinary histories of the knowledge systems that such intellectuals inherited, participated in, and explicated to their orientalist counterparts. Indeed, just as Jones did not happen on his insights through some magic epiphany of original genius, so, too, were intellectuals like Ārzū and I'tisām al-Dīn part of a much deeper genealogy of Indo-Persian knowledge systems, among which comparative philology had been immensely important for several centuries. What follows, therefore, is less interested in what informants did or did not tell colonial administrators like Jones than in sketching the history and state of Indo-Persian comparative philology even before the colonial apparatus got hold of it.

Cosmopolitan Maintenance in a Vernacular World

From at least the eleventh century CE, comparative philology constituted one of the key intellectual sites—perhaps *the* key site—wherein a whole host of concerns central to the maintenance of Indo-Persian literary and linguistic cosmopolitanism was negotiated. Methodologically, these concerns ranged from the purely lexicographical to the densely, metalinguistically theoretical, but throughout, several themes came to be consistently articulated. First, there was a collective, albeit diffuse, project of maintaining the conditions of possibility for supralocal literary intelligibility, and the continued circulation of knowledge generally, among elites separated by space (although they were all using Persian, their regional and local spoken idioms were often mutually unintelligible) and time (as with any language, words used by earlier generations became obsolete). Assisting literati and other intellectuals in traversing the resulting "comprehension gaps"[5] required even the earliest medieval and early modern Indo-Persian *farhang*s, or dictionaries, to be explicitly comparative enterprises that sought to mediate between the desire for cosmopolitan coherence, on the one hand, and the interplay of local vernacularity on the other. A second key early development was methodological, namely, the

technique of authenticating linguistic meanings by adducing the testimony of poets. An ancillary effect of this practice was that it also required philologists to develop increasingly sophisticated archival and text-critical disciplines (one cannot use a poet as an authority, after all, unless everyone agrees about what the poet wrote in the first place) and also created a key site for negotiating the literary canon (a poet is only a useful authority if everyone agrees that he or she is a good poet). Philology emerged, in consequence, not just as an isolated discipline for compulsive word mavens but as one that was central to courtly literary culture and the production of cultural memory.

These themes start to intermingle right from the beginning of the Indo-Persian philological tradition. The earliest convincingly attested New Persian *farhang* was compiled by a musician, Abū Hafs Sughdī (ca. ninth-tenth century CE), prefiguring a nexus among philological inquiry, poetry, and broader cultural-performative pathways that would continue to be echoed as the discipline developed.[6] Sughdī's *farhang* is no longer extant, but manuscripts of it continued to be circulated well into the seventeenth century, when, as Baevskii has noted, *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*, *Majma' al-Furs*, and other early modern lexicons like *Farhang-i Rashīdī* all mentioned it as a source.[7]

Another influential, but now lost, dictionary of the early period was compiled by Hakīm Qatrān Tabrīzī (d. 1072–73), "the leading poet of Azerbaijan."[8] Like Sughdī's, Qatrān's lexicon is also invoked as a key early source by numerous roughly contemporary and later *farhang*s, and already in Qatrān's work the challenges posed to supralocal literary comprehension by various types of local vernacularity—even elite courtly vernacularity—are explicitly formulated as a motivation for an ethnographically-inflected version of the type of "philological lexicography" that later emerged among antiquarians in sixteenth-century Europe (Considine 2008: 19–55). This is vividly illustrated by an encounter with Qatrān described by the renowned poet, scientist, and itinerant mystic philosopher Nāsir-i Khusrau (1004–88) in his *Safarnāma*, or travelogue. He writes:

> In Tabriz, I met a poet by the name of Qatrān. He used to write nice poetry, but he did not know Persian very well. He came to me, brought with him the *dīwān*s of Munjīk and Daqīqī, read them to me, and asked that I clarify the difficult passages. I clarified them for him and he wrote down these explanations. Then he read me his own poems.[9]

This passage immediately highlights the degree to which New Persian emerged, as it were, always already intra- (or maybe infra-) vernacularized. In addressing such intravernacularity, early lexicons like Qatrān's were not

multilingual per se, in the sense of being intended as comprehensive "foreign" language primers; nor do we have any indication that they were read as such. Rather, not unlike Robert Cawdrey's much later *Table Alphabeticall* (1604)—widely considered to be the first monolingual English dictionary of its kind—the point was to gloss "hard" words that were nonetheless "vsual" in literary writing and educated speech.[10] In Cawdrey's seventeenth-century England, a given word having been "borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine, or French, &c." did not exclude it from the category of "vsuall English wordes," however exotic or "hard" those words might have seemed for the "Ladies, Gentlewomen, or other vnskilfull persons" whose literary comprehension he was trying to "benefit & helpe" (Cawdrey 2007: 37). With Nāsir-i Khusrau and Qatrān, however, the dynamic seems to be one of eleventh-century regional chauvinism rather than Cawdrey's somewhat unapologetic class and gender snobbery. Before renouncing courtly life and embarking on his world travels, Nāsir-i Khusrau had been an elite state secretary (*dabīr*), and one of the premier poets at a succession of Ghaznavid and Saljūq courts in Central Asia, courts that had as good a claim to cultural hegemony as any other corner of the contemporary Persophone world. When he snipes that a less urbane figure like Qatrān "did not know Persian very well" (*zabān-i fārsī nikū na-mīdānist*), Khusrau is therefore not really impugning Qatrān's basic linguistic competence but rather his "unskillful" (in Cawdrey's sense of limited) linguistic range and level of (perceived) refinement. They were, after all, communicating in Persian itself, and even Khusrau admits that Qatrān, for all his rough edges, "used to write nice poetry" (*shi'rī-yi nīk mīguft*).

We cannot know what Qatrān, for his part, thought of his illustrious interlocutor, but it stands to reason that whatever else he might have thought, Qatrān saw Nāsir-i Khusrau as a useful native informant. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the two poetic *dīwān*s that Qatrān brings to Nāsir-i Khusrau for lexical assistance are those of Munjīk (from Balkh) and Daqīqī (d. 978, from Tirmiz, in modern Uzbekistan), both tenth-century poets from Nāsir-i Khusrau's native region of Transoxiana.[11] Their idiomatic usages would have been very familiar to him, but clearly not to someone like Qatrān, at the crossroads of Iran, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Byzantium, and Arabia—that is, the other end of the Persian cosmopolis. Right from the earliest years of New Persian literary culture, then, locality clearly inflected what type of Persian one spoke, and thus, too, what poems one was able to compose, comprehend, and fully appreciate.

Such local linguistic peculiarities, or *taṣarrufāt*, would continue to pose obstacles for Persophone poets and other literati in the ensuing centuries, and

hence they provided an ongoing impetus for the development of comparative lexicography, even more so as Persian's geographic reach as a language of literary and diplomatic culture continued to expand. Perhaps it should come as little surprise, then, that other poets besides Qatrān also dabbled in philology. The celebrated Sāmānid poet Rūdakī (d. 940–51) is said to have compiled a versified dictionary of Perso-Arabic infinitives called *Tāj al-Maṣādir fī Lughat al-Furs*, and the famed Ghaznavid poet Farrukhī Sīstānī (d. 1037–38) is reported to have compiled a glossary of "uncommon words" (*Nawādir al-Lughat*). Both of these works are now apparently lost, as is another early lexicon possibly penned by none other than the great Abū al-Qāsim Firdausī (d. 1020), author of the epic *Shāhnāma*.[12]

But one of the most influential dictionaries compiled just after the initial phase was Abū Mansūr 'Alī bin Ahmad Asadī Tūsī's eleventh-century *Lughat-i Furs*.[13] Asadī, too, was a celebrated poet, and was, like Firdausi, from Tūs, one of the great cultural centers of medieval West Asia. Despite these roots in the cultural epicenter of the Persophone world, Asadī actually compiled his dictionary farther west, in Azerbaijan, and thus, as with Qatrān, local geography figures importantly in his scholarship. His explicit goal in writing *Lughat-i Furs*, he explains, was to provide a reference with which to assist literati from northwestern Iran and Azerbaijan in understanding the "*darī*" (i.e., the Central Asian idiom of Persian) poetry being produced farther east, particularly in the courts of greater Khurāsān and Central Asia. Asadī acknowledges the earlier contribution of Qatrān but also greatly widens the scope of the latter's enterprise, expanding both the thematic range of lexis that he glosses and, even more significant, the practice of citing poetic "witness" verses (*shawāhid*) to authenticate his definitions. The practice had been in use, reportedly as early as Sughdī's work and to some extent in Qatrān's as well.[14] But Asadī tends to be credited with standardizing the technique, henceforth de rigueur, which in turn helped make philological scholarship a critical site for the consolidation of the classical literary canon. Citing poets like Firdausī, Rūdakī, Sanā'ī, 'Unsurī, Daqīqī, and so on not only served the practical function of verifying and exemplifying unfamiliar idiomatic usages, but also established these poets as preferred literary authorities. Indeed, one could go so far as to argue that the widely accepted Indo-Persian literary canon is itself a product of this connection to the discipline of lexicography—and thereby to the problems of region, idiom, translation, and linguistic instability that often preoccupied the Persophone literati engaged in such philological scholarship. Meanwhile, literary erudition fast became not just a desideratum among lexicographers,

but a disciplinary prerequisite. And, as would also happen a few centuries later in Europe after Calepino's use of illustrative classical quotations in the "best-selling Latin dictionary of the sixteenth century" (see Considine 2008: 29–31)—though not in English until Samuel Johnson's eighteenth-century dictionary—the summoning of classical Indo-Persian poets as "witnesses" to linguistic meaning created a space in which methodological rigor was at a premium and scholarly debates about how poets *produce* meaning, that is, how literary language works, could take place.

As Persophone polities in Central, South, and West Asia expanded and contracted, and as intellectuals, mystics, merchants, soldiers, and sultans circulated throughout the region, Persian poetry circulated ever more widely, as did expressive prose writing of all kinds, particularly under the larger rubric of *inshā'*, a generic umbrella category that covered epistolary writing, philosophical treatises, courtly occasional writings, *ādāb* and *akhlāqī* wisdom literature, and especially diplomatic letters and other types of administrative documents.[15] This bustling textual circulation helped the philological work of professional poets like Qatrān and Asadī Tūsī gain a wider audience, and it also inspired other "men of the pen" (*ahl-i qalam*) to get into the lexicographical act. For instance, one of the first major dictionaries produced after Asadī Tūsī's was the *Ṣiḥāḥ al-Furs* of Muhammad bin Hindūshāh Nakhjavāni (b. 1288 or 1289)—aka Shams-i Munshī, the "sun among imperial secretaries"—better known for his seminal manual on the norms of epistolary and administrative prose, *Dastūr al-Kātib fī Ta'yīn al-Marātib*.[16] The very fact that Nakhjavānī dedicated his dictionary, compiled in Tabrīz in 1328, to the Il-Khānid *wazīr* Ghiyās al-Dīn, who was himself the son of the renowned historian, physician, botanist, and administrator Rashīd al-Dīn Fazl-Allāh (d. 1318), gives some sense of the eclectic interdisciplinary audience for such lexicographical works.[17] Nakhjavānī also uses extensive poetic quotations to authenticate many of his definitions and acknowledges Asadī Tūsī by name as one of his main sources.

In subsequent generations, Asadī Tūsī continued to be a major source, for instance, in Fakhrī-yi Isfahānī's *Mi'yār-i Jamālī va Miftāḥ-i Abū Iṣhāqī*.[18] The title, "A Touchstone for Jamāl and a Key for Abū Ishāq," refers to the author's benefactor Jamāl al-Dīn Abū Ishāq Injū (r. 1341–53), a ruler who is himself known to posterity primarily as a key early patron of the celebrated Hāfiz Shirazi, perhaps the greatest *ghazal* poet of all time. Hāfiz himself famously envisioned a huge cosmopolitan audience for his poetry, declaring that his "Persian candy" (*qand-i pārsī*) would echo through the throats of sugar-crunching Indian parrots all the way to Bengal. But more salient here is to see

that contextualizing a work like *Mi'yār-i Jamālī* means situating Indo-Persian lexicography within a whole constellation of comparative scholarly and intellectual pursuits that occupied the premodern Persophone intelligentsia. Indeed, the dictionary itself is only one of four parts of *Mi'yār-i Jamālī*, the other three being treatises on prosody, rhyme, and rhetoric, that is, the basic tools for what Pollock has described as the core mission of the discipline of philology, the "making sense of texts."[19]

A final, very important theme that emerged in the earliest phase appears perhaps for the first time in the *Majmū'at al-Furs*, attributed to the Turkish scientist Abū al-'Alā 'Abd al-Momin Jārūtī, aka Safī Kahhāl, "the master optician" (ca. fourteenth-fifteenth century).[20] The *Majmū'at* echoes many of the concerns with cosmopolitan multiglossia that had preoccupied most of its philological predecessors but adds a very significant twist. The author explains that he compiled the dictionary specifically to help his son, who had "developed an affinity for reading the Persian poetry of the past masters (*ash'ār-i pārsī-yi ustādān-i mutaqaddim*), especially the *Shāhnāma*," but had found that there were "many *pahlavī*, *darī*, *pārsī*, and *māwarā' al-nahrī* [i.e., Transoxianian] words for which he didn't know the meaning."[21] Unsurprisingly, then, he too provides extensive *shawāhid* verses from "past masters" like Firdausī, Rūdakī, Daqīqī, Manjīk, 'Unsurī, Farrukhī, Anvarī, Sa'dī, and others. But he is also, like Nakhjavānī before him, quick to criticize their predecessor Asadī Tūsī's methodology, both for its lack of comprehensiveness and for Asadī's disorderly (*nā-tamām wa nāqiṣ al-tartīb*) arrangement of the lexicon. Canonicity and disciplinarity are explicitly linked here as key components of philological rigor. But the more crucial point is that clearly, already by the thirteenth century, Persophone intellectuals across 'Ajam were beginning to sense a temporal distance not only between themselves and the earliest New Persian poets like Rūdakī and Firdausī but also, a fortiori, between themselves and the even earlier *pahlavī* lexicon. This new comprehension gap, however, was no longer just a problem of regional idiomatic differences but rather an issue of literary historical time and linguistic obsolescence—temporal, rather than geographical *taṣarrufāt*, as it were—that faced everyone who used Persian, no matter where they were from. In due course, as the sense of nostalgia for and separation from past poets grew increasingly common, the trope of the scholar-poet sitting with friends, family, and/or a patron who begged him to deploy his erudition to help them decipher the great poetry of old became nearly ubiquitous in lexicographical prefaces all over the Indo-Persian ecumene.

Thus, from one of the first entries in the next major phase of dictionary

production, Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh Qawwās Ghaznavī's *Farhang-i Qawwās* (late thirteenth or early fourteenth century),[22] to one of the last, the sixteenth-century *Mujmal al-'Ajam*, the most commonly expressed motivation for engaging in lexicographical scholarship remained the desire to aid in poetic comprehension—particularly of what Qawwās had called "the poetry of past masters, especially the *Shāhnāma*."

The consistency with which lexicographers deployed this trope can, in fact, be somewhat misleading when viewed through the modern lens of national language regimes. For instance, explaining the fact that much of the extant dictionary production from this period shifted to South Asia during this period, some modern scholars have suggested that it was because Indian poets had some special need of such works in order to continue using Persian. Perhaps there is some correlative truth to this notion but only if one adds a couple of major caveats. For one thing, one has to take into account the lucrative patronage that was available in North India under the Delhi sultans compared with many other parts of 'Ajam, particularly during and in the wake of the Mongol conquests in Central and West Asia.[23] This drew many intellectuals to Indian courts—such as the first great Persian literary biographer, Muhammad Aufi—that might otherwise have composed their works elsewhere. Moreover, as we have just seen, clearly Indian poets were not the only ones who needed assistance grappling with the classical canon. Even intellectuals from places like Tus, Ghazni, and Isfahan were challenged by the poetry of earlier centuries, particularly if that poetry had been produced in some relatively distant part of the Persophone world.

Another proposition has it that the spurt of Persian lexicography in India during this period can be explained as part of a conscious project of Indianizing the erstwhile, supposedly "pure Persian" idiom. As one scholar has put it, "[T]he earliest dictionaries must have helped [in] supplying ready-made [Hindi] loan words [for Persian writers in India]."[24] But such an argument rests entirely on an assumption that simply because many of the dictionaries were produced in India they were designed primarily for the purpose of adding Indian words, neologisms, and thematic topoi to the Persian lexicon. No doubt some of this did happen, but what we see far more prevalently is that the impetus for philological scholarship was almost always, at its heart, conservative and descriptive: helping readers work through the existing classical canon, and glossing difficult words and regional idioms that were already a part of accepted poetic practice, rather than introducing and prescribing new words and expressions (whether Hindi or otherwise) for poets to insert into their compositions.

Qawwās, for instance, despite being from Malwa in central India, simply duplicates many of Asadī Tūsī's *shawāhid* verses and adds others from poets who flourished after Tūsī's lifetime, such as Sanā'ī, Khāqānī, Nizāmī Ganjavī, and 'Attār—hardly the sort of authorities one would recruit for an effort to dilute, much less insidiously Indianize, the language. Another major source from this period was Hājib-i Khairāt Dihlavī's *Dastūr al-Afāẓil fī Lughat al-Faẓā'il* (1342) compiled during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq (r. 1325-52).[25] Like Qawwās, and so many who came later, Hājib-i Khairāt also claims that he wrote at the behest of friends who were having trouble reading the *Shāhnāma*—here too, then, the point was to adduce and elucidate words that were already *in* the classical tradition rather than to shoehorn local vocabulary and idioms into the "pure Persian" lexicon. The guiding principle for most such philologists seems to have been: poets from other times and places have written thus, and I have provided my readers with a key for understanding their words and expressions. This metaphor would even become literalized with Maulānā Muhammad bin Dā'ūd bin Muhammad bin Mahmūd Shādīyābādī's fifteenth-century *Miftāḥ al-Fuẓalā* (1468), "A Key for the Learned."[26]

In between *Dastūr al-Afāẓil* and *Miftāḥ al-Fuẓalā*, numerous dictionaries were composed in India, including Ashraf bin Sharaf al-Muzakkar Furūghī's *Dānishnāma-yi Qadar Khān* (1405, composed in Chanderi [Malwa]), Muhammad "Dhārwāl" Dihlavī's *Adāt al-Fuẓalā* (1419), Badr-i Ibrāhīm's *Farhang-i Zafāngūyā* (mid–fifteenth century), and Muhammad bin Qawām Balkhī's *Baḥr al-Faẓā'il fī Manāfi' al-Afāẓil* (also fifteenth century). Each one, in its own way, confronted various philological problems associated with multilingual cosmopolitanism, canonicity, and disciplinarity, and all continued to use *shawāhid* verses to further solidify the nascent canon. All four of these works, moreover, were concerned less with "Hindī" or "Hindavī"—though many do take note of Indic expressions that regularly occurred in poetry—than with adducing Persian-Persian equivalences in *pahlavī* and *darī*, disambiguating Perso-Arabic compounds, and mapping out linguistic equivalents in *multiple* other languages, including Indic ones but also Turkish, Afghan, Pashto, Aramaic, and even "Rūmī" languages like Greek, Latin, Byzantine, and Syriac. Much of this latter, robustly comparative tendency had to do with Indo-Persian lexicographers' awareness that they were also serving a community of scientists, medical experts, and philosophers who, besides often being literati themselves, were steeped in the scientific discourse and traditions of Greco-Hellenic learning that the Islamicate world was heir to.[27] It was these wide-ranging comparative linguistic analyses that laid the foundation on which the more renowned and systematic early modern compilations like

Farhang-i Jahāngīrī (1608), and in turn the subsequent researches of theorists like Khān Ārzū (1687–1756) were built. However brilliant and innovative these later scholars might have been, neither their insights nor William Jones's after them would have been likely absent these pioneering earlier efforts.

Indeed, already by the late fifteenth century one can find examples of an effort to move Indo-Persian philology toward a scientific method for linguistic and grammatical analysis, for instance, in Ibrāhīm Qawām al-Dīn Fārūqī's *Sharafnāma-yi Manerī* (1473–74), named in honor of the great Sufi master Shaikh Sharaf al-Dīn Ahmad bin Yahyā Manerī but compiled at the request of the ruler of Bengal, Abū al-Muzaffar Bārbak Shāh (r. 1457–74).[28] After boasting that his dictionary is "replete from top to bottom with pearls of *darī*" (*sar-ā-pā ki mamlū zi durr-i darī*), Fārūqī's preface dilates at length over the structural features of various types of suffixes, enclitic particles, and the uses of the genitive/adjectival *iẓāfa* particle. In the body of the work, his definitions also included meticulous written directions for the diacritical representation of sound patterns and differentiation among potentially ambiguous spellings, both to assure proper pronunciation and to facilitate deeper etymological understanding.

The Scientific Turn

The degree to which this "scientific turn" relied on—and acknowledged—earlier successes in Indo-Persian philological scholarship is on vivid display in the work of Hasan Jamal al-Dīn Husain Injū, a Shirazi émigré to Akbar's court and the author of the *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* (1608).[29] One gets a clear idea of Injū's—and Akbar's—perspective on the continuing relevance of many of the themes discussed above, and yet with an equally powerful sense that he was attempting to address ʿAjam's shared linguistic past in an entirely new way, from Injū's description of an assembly that took place while the imperial army was encamped at Srinagar.

> During the heavenly assembly . . . [His Majesty] sent for this humblest of loyal servants. I was ushered into his most exalted royal presence, whereupon the emperor's pearl-strewing and jewel-scattering tongue proclaimed:
>
> "Since the time when dominion over the lands of ʿAjam fell into the hands of the Arabs, the language of Pars has undergone a process of admixture with Arabic words, whereas many erstwhile *pārsī*, *darī*, and *pahlavī* words have become obsolete, or even extirpated. As a result, the interpretation of certain books that were composed in the Persian dialects of the olden days, and the meanings of some poems that poets of old had bejeweled in ornamented verse, have remained shrouded in veils of mystery and trapped

behind curtains of concealment. For this reason, in the past I have repeatedly requested the servants of this court that is a refuge for intellectuals to compile a book containing all the authentic Persian words, archaic usages, and idiomatic expressions, but no one has yet been able to perform this duty satisfactorily. You must compile a treatise on this noble science in my exalted name, so that the fruits of our eternal empire will leave a lasting impression, day and night, on the pages of destiny, and from which, for the rest of time, future masters of wisdom, knowledge, intellect, and foresight will derive use and benefit."[30]

Akbar's commandment here to use philology to rescue the *pahlavī* cultural world from oblivion fits a broader pattern at his court, promulgated especially by his celebrated courtier Abū al-Fazl ibn Mubārak (1551–1602), of interest in pre-Islamic culture and history. It is that interest that in part motivated the extensive Sanskrit-Persian translation projects that Akbar and other Mughals patronized, and here it is reflective of an attempt to claim a deep civilizational connection between India and pre-Islamic Persia as a way of legitimizing the Mughals' claims of cultural authority over their chief rivals, the Safavids. There is, thus, an obvious political weight to his patronage of Injū's project. Note, too, that the chief instigators of *pahlavī*'s decline, at least in Akbar's vision, are the Arabs, and thus it is the cosmopolitan heritage of the entire cultural world of 'Ajam, not just its Indian corner, that Akbar seeks to recover. His dissatisfaction with earlier philological efforts toward such an end are echoed by Injū himself, in a passage where the latter explains how he had come to cultivate his linguistic expertise in the first place.

From an early stage of childhood I developed a taste for and total absorption with the reading and studying of classical poems (*ash'ār-i qudamā*), and spent a lot of time in the company of friends and acquaintances discussing the *dīwāns* of the literary masters of old (*ustādān-i pāstān*). Often, when their poems contained [unfamiliar] words, expressions, etc. in *pārsī*, *darī*, and *pahlavī*, I would turn helplessly to the dictionaries of the Persian language known as *farhangs*. I found so many words and expressions in the ancient poetry that were not in any dictionary, and those that were there had very contrary or confusing meanings . . . and thus a will to compile a book in this noble science (*fann-i sharīf*) motivated my previously apathetic mind. I started to collect books of poetry and prose, and rare lexicons, arranged them, and indexed them into a number of categories (*ba-naẓm mīrasīda dar juzwī-yi chand darj mīnamūdam*). And to make a long story short, from the time I was not even a decade old, for the next thirty years I spent some part of my time and some piece of my life researching *pārsī*, *pahlavī*, and *darī* words, expressions, etc.

Here, as if to punctuate his—and the Mughals'—claim as standard-bearers of the classical Persian literary heritage, Injū invokes the famous lines attributed to Firdausī, followed by a confident assertion of his scholarly originality and methodological rigor.

> *basī ranj burdam dar īn sāl-i sī*
> *'ajam zinda kardam badīn pārsī*
> *zi man gasht dast-i faṣāḥat qawī*
> *ba-pardākhtam daftar-i pahlavī*

> So much have I labored these years thirty,
> That all of 'Ajam has come alive with *pārsī;*
> Through me, the hand of eloquence has become strong,
> And I have bound together the book of *pahlavī*

> Through a great deal of research and investigation (*tatabbu' wa tafaḥḥuṣ*), I archived countless words and expressions that no previous lexicographer (*ṣāḥib-i farhang*) had touched upon; or else, their methodology was so haphazard from beginning to end that they might as well not have mentioned them. With much study, I achieved such a level of expertise in this worthy discipline that there remained very few words and expressions to whose meaning this lowly author could not bear witness from memory. Consequently, many fair-minded friends considered my knowledge of such matters to be quite authoritative, and thus referred every difficulty they encountered in the art of prose (*fann-i naṣr*) or science of philology (*'ilm-i lughat*) to me.[31]

At this point in the text, his confidence in the originality of his scholarship notwithstanding, Injū foregrounds his disciplinary lineage, acknowledging some forty-four sources by name, including most of those discussed above, and mentioning nine other treatises the names and authors of which were already unknown by his lifetime. He also notes having consulted numerous commentaries and histories on the books of *zand* and *pāzand*; poetic *dīwān*s and other books of verse from which he took examples (*tamṣīl*) to corroborate his definitions; and a variety of treatises on zoology, geography, and other technical sciences.[32] Injū even possessed something of a modern linguistic anthropological impulse, explaining that, when all else failed, he would rely on native informants from other regions.

> I also collected many words for which there was no trace in the available lexicons, in unraveling the meaning of which there was no remedy but to enquire from natives of the area . . . with respect to words that I encountered in Hakīm Sanā'ī Ghaznavī's *dīwān*, the *Ḥadīqa*, I sought out men from Ghazni or Kabul; or for words that appeared in the *dīwān* or *Safar-nāma*[33] of

> Hakīm Nāsir-i Khusrau I asked people from Khurasan or Badakhshan, and indexed (*murattab sākhtam*) all those that could be corroborated by verse citations from eloquent poets.[34]

Here again, we see a powerful example of the connection between lexicography and courtly literariness that was, it should now be clear, as old as the discipline itself. We see, too, in the ease with which Injū has access to informants from all over Central and West Asia, a hint of the level of transregional mobility that was possible, even common, among intellectuals in early modern 'Ajam, especially Mughal India.[35] In both content and method, however, the text is comprehensive and self-consciously theoretical in a way that sets it apart from many of its predecessors. Besides several highly influential chapters on archaic *pahlavī* usages, Injū's *farhang* contains sections and subsections dealing not only with various subfields of linguistic and literary analysis—grammatical principles, spelling, inflection, diacritical theory, affixes, suffixes, transposition of vocalized letters, and so on—but also with other, more specialized topics like geography, aesthetic figuration, the nature of certain types of mixed Perso-Arabic compounds, and a detailed excursus on words unique to the dialect of Injū's native town of Shiraz.[36] Even where Injū does concern himself with glossing local or Indic words and themes, it is only as one subset of a much larger, more inclusive, and more ambitious comparative vision. The point, after all, was to create a comprehensive and authoritative lexicon that would "enliven" *all* of 'Ajam, one that would spread the Mughals' fame as a haven for intellectuals and, in Akbar's words, "leave a lasting impression on the pages of destiny" (*bar safḥāt-i rūzgār . . . aṣarī-yi bāqī ba-mānd*).

Indo-Persian Philology on the Eve of the Colonial Encounter

And this it certainly did, at least in the ensuing generations. As mentioned above, *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* was a key, though for the most part unacknowledged, source for William Jones, and it remained an important basic reference in Iran, too, well into the nineteenth century—where it served as a crucial source text in the *pahlavī* revivalism that helped frame the modern nationalist Persian literary historiography that, ironically enough, even now tends to exclude India and its contributions to Persian language and literature.[37] Closer to Injū's own time, however, when the Iranian philologist Muhammad Qāsim Surūrī of Kāshān compiled a second edition of his own dictionary, *Majma' al-Furs* (1630), he relied heavily on *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*, which he considered authoritative and whose author he effusively lionizes as "the Nawāb of exalted

title, the receptacle of majesty and glory, full of grandeur and magnificence, the cup-bearer of empire and nobility, the pillar of sovereigns and magistrates, King Jamāl al-Dīn Husain Injū."[38]

But perhaps the two most grandiose and ambitious seventeenth-century dictionaries after *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* were Muhammad Husain "Burhān" Tabrīzī's *Burhān-i Qāṭi'* (1652) and Mullā 'Abd al-Rashīd Thattawī's *Farhang-i Rashīdī* (1653).[39] Muhammad Husain Tabrīzī had dedicated *Burhān-i Qāṭi'* to his Indian patron, the Deccani Sultan 'Abd-allāh Qutb Shāh (1626–72), and his work nudged Indo-Persian lexicography to a level of greater critical abstraction than had previously been attempted, even by Injū, whose work he criticizes quite explicitly. Specifically, Burhān repudiated the fundamental methodology of using *shawāhid* verses for definitional corroboration—a technique that, in a new methodological twist, Burhān felt had undermined his philological predecessors' authority and the universal applicability of their claims. Burhān thus relied solely on straightforward prose glosses, dismissing earlier lexicographers as mere bibliophiles or "collectors of so many books" (*ḥāwī-yi chandīn kitāb*).[40] He also took issue with the irregular arrangement of words in earlier dictionaries, insisting that the lack of a sensible and systematic organizing principle had hampered the field as a whole. Despite these criticisms, it is worth noting that the languages that mark the horizon of his interest reflect basically the same transregional and multilingual parameters that had characterized the field from the very beginning: *fārsī*, *pahlavī*, and *darī*, of course, but also Greek, Syriac, *rūmī*, Arabic, *zand*, and *pāzand*.[41]

'Abd al-Rashīd Thattawī's *Farhang-i Rashīdī* (1653–54) was also, like its almost exact contemporary, *Burhān-i Qāṭi'*, written partly as a rejoinder to Injū and Surūrī.[42] In his preface, 'Abd al-Rashīd acknowledges *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* and *Majma' al-Furs* as the most comprehensive (*jāmi'-tarīn*) works the field had yet seen—he was, apparently, not acquainted with the *Burhān*, which had been finished barely a year earlier—but adds that "they contain a number of features which cannot but be repudiated." Among these, 'Abd al-Rashīd's first and foremost objection is similar to those lodged by Burhān, namely, Injū and Surūrī's "pointless repetitions" (*mukarrara-yi bī-ḥāṣil*) and "excessive" (*mutakaṣṣira*) use of *shawāhid* verses. The fact that both *Burhān-i Qāṭi'* and *Farhang-i Rashīdī* sought so adamantly to disavow this earlier practice might suggest a yet further step along Indo-Persian philology's disciplinary evolution toward a more universalizing discourse of linguistic science.

This universalizing discourse would reach its high point in the following century in the work of Sirāj al-Dīn 'Alī Khān "Ārzū" (1687–1756). Ārzū was one of the most prominent intellectuals in northern India during his lifetime

and came from a distinguished family lineage that included mystical luminaries like the Chishtī *ṣūfī* saint Nasīr al-Dīn "Chirāgh-i Delhī" (d. 1356) and the great Nīshāpūrī mystical poet Farīd al-Dīn 'Attār (d. ca. 1221).[43] His circle of contemporary friends and associates runs like a veritable who's who of eighteenth-century North India's most prominent Indo-Persian intellectuals.[44] But his enduring fame rests less on his glittering circle of associates than on his own prodigious literary and scholarly production. This included not only *dīwāns* of his own collected Persian and Urdu poetry but also a collection of eloquent personal letters (*ruq'āt*), a massive literary biographical compendium (*Majma' al-Nafā'is*), a number of commentaries on poetical works, and of course his numerous works of lexicographical analysis and critical philology such as *Sirāj al-Lughat*, *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*, *Nawādir al-Alfāẓ*, *Dād-i Sukhan*, *Tanbīh al-Ghāfilīn*, *Muṣmir*, and several more besides.

Of these, probably the best known is *Muṣmir*, or "The Fruit-Bearing Tree," in which Ārzū appears to have been the first to postulate a deep linguistic relationship between Persian and Sanskrit, which he refers to as "Book Hindi" (*hindī-yi kitābī*). At the time, Ārzū was embroiled in a notoriously open feud with the Iranian émigré Shaikh Muhammad 'Alī Hazīn Lahiji (1692–1766), who eventually settled in Banaras and was himself one of the most accomplished litterateurs of the era. Hazīn's routine, and often rude, dismissals of Indian poets' Persian competence caused an uproar in the literary salons of eighteenth-century North India, and Ārzū is regularly viewed as a defender of Indian Persian against the rebukes of Hazīn and a growing chorus of like-minded Iranian critics who began increasingly to claim that Indian literati did not have the competence or authority as native speakers (*ahl-i zabān*) even to use Persian correctly, much less experiment poetically with the language.[45]

There is little doubt that such a defense of Indian Persian was indeed a part of Ārzū's philological mission. Hazīn had claimed that Indian poets' poetic innovations were nothing but incompetent errors, in a sense challenging the very foundations of Persophone cosmopolitanism. Faced with such a challenge, a lesser intellect than Ārzū might have sought simply to rebut Hazīn's criticisms, but Ārzū responded, especially in *Muṣmir*, with an entire theory of language, drawing on his mastery of eight hundred years of accumulated comparative philological knowledge to take Hazīn's premise and turn it completely on its head. His vision thus went far beyond the merely ad hominem, and his deployment of the combined lexicographical data and critical skill set that he had inherited represents something larger still: a culmination of the field's centuries-long trend toward a self-reflective mode of theoretical analysis about the nature of *all* languages—cosmopolitan languages especially, but,

significantly, with particular attention to questions like: how cosmopolitan languages remain intelligible despite the encroachment of various forms of what Pollock has described as "vernacular mediations"[46]; why it is that urban space (the *urdū*) and rural space (*dih*) tend to produce different linguistic sensibilities; and how deep linguistic structures get diffused into regional adumbrations that can be analyzed in a comparative historical framework. The argument, in all its breadth and complexity, is far too nuanced to even begin to summarize or do justice to it here. But it basically hinges on two related propositions. First, certain languages are linguistically related, in deep structural ways that are not always entirely obvious to everyday practitioners of one or the other language or even multiple related languages. It is in this context that he makes the observation about Persian and Sanskrit, and Ārzū suggests that it is this underlying linguistic "concomitance" (*tawāfuq*) that gives the Indian poets a kind of generative competence in Persian that is as old as that of the Iranians, and in effect preauthorizes Indian usages that might seem odd to a modern Iranian like Hazīn. A second key proposition is that of the inevitability of error by *all* speakers of a given language, even native ones. If it is demonstrable that even native speakers make mistakes, Ārzū reasons, then one cannot argue prima facie that native speakers have some special innate competence whereby to dictate usage, particularly in a context where, as Ārzū had already tried to show, the very notion of who was or wasn't a "native" speaker was inherently unstable. Urbane literary discourse, moreover, was by its very nature something that even native speakers were required to learn, not merely through speaking but through education and the study of texts. This made them just as liable to err, whether in usage or in aesthetic taste, as anyone else.[47]

These ideas, and Ārzū's philological works and commentaries generally, created as much of a sensation among North Indian literati as the storm stirred up by Hazīn's imprecations. And thus much of the eighteenth-century Indo-Persian intelligentsia was abuzz with debates about the nature of language, as Ārzū's work spawned its own set of defenders and detractors, some of whom took positions that might strike us as somewhat counterintuitive. For instance, it was an Indian, Siyālkotī Mal Wārista, who emerged as Hazīn's biggest defender against Ārzū's attacks, producing a blistering rejoinder called *Rajm al-Shayāṭīn*, "Stoning the Devils." And yet Wārista nevertheless relied heavily on the first edition of *Bahār-i 'Ajam*, a lexicon produced by one of Ārzū's closest acolytes, Tek Chand Bahār, while preparing his own philological treatise, *Muṣṭaliḥāt al-Shu'arā*. Bahār, in turn, incorporated and acknowledged the use of Wārista's analysis when he compiled a second, later edition of

Bahār-i 'Ajam.[48] Meanwhile, another member of Ārzū's circle, Ānand Rām Mukhlis, produced his own compendium of contemporary expressions, many of them specific to the Indian context, the *Mir'āt al-Iṣtilāḥāt.*[49]

These debates were exceedingly complex, but in closing, the key point is to recognize that they were part of a larger negotiation, built on tremendously intricate mastery of the philological sciences, about how, in the most basic sense, words are related to other words, and how they can and should be used in the worlds of culture and power. This, too, was the dynamic and vigorously competitive state of comparative philological scholarship in mid- to late-eighteenth-century North India, when the first generation of Indo-Persian literati to begin serving the East India Company in large numbers as *munshīs* was trained. Perhaps it is time some of them, and their predecessors in Injū's "noble science" (*fann-i sharif*), received a bit of credit for their critical role in its modern intellectual history.

Notes

[1] Pollock 2009: 936–38.

[2] For details on Jones's career and legacy, see for instance, the various essays in Cannon and Brine 1995; Trautmann 1997; Schwab 1984; and Raj 2007: 1–26, 95–138. His famous "Third Anniversary Discourse," in which he first postulated the linguistic relationship among Sanskrit, Persian, Latin, and Greek (among other "Indo-Aryan" languages) has been described by Hockett as one of the four major "breakthroughs" in modern linguistics, by Sebeok as "the fundamental postulate in Indo-European comparative grammar," and by Suniti Kumar Chatterji as "epoch-making" (all three quoted in Robins 1995: 84). As of April 2009, the *Encyclopedia Britannica Online* reported that it provided "the impetus for the development of comparative linguistics," and Wikipedia, for good measure, described it as "a tremendous find," for which, "of all his discoveries, Jones is best known today." "He was actually a colonial judge," the physicist and essayist Jeremy Bernstein recently reminded us, "but in his spare time he translated from Sanskrit and founded the field of historic linguistics (2010).

[3] Video of the scene in question, in which the narrator portentously intones that "what [Jones] found would rewrite the history of the world's languages," is available through the program's interactive timeline (http://www.pbs.org/thestoryofindia/timeline/6/); the link for the actual video simply states "1786: William Jones discovers Sanskrit's relationship to Latin and Greek."

[4] I'tisām al-Dīn 1827: 63–66 (and 56–58 of the accompanying Hindustānī translation). Compare also Tavakoli-Targhi 2003: 106, and Haq's translation in I'tisām al-Dīn 2002.

[5] Storey and de Blois 1992: 216.

[6] Perhaps the most famous example of this nexus would not come for another several centuries, in the form of Mīrzā Khān ibn Fakhr al-Dīn Muhammad's Persian treatise on Braj music and poetics, the *Tuḥfat al-Hind* (ca. 1675). See Ziauddin 1935; McGregor 2003: 942–44; and Brown 2003, especially chapter 2, "Indo-Persian Musical Treatises under the Mughals".

[7] Injū 1876: 5; Surūrī 1960–63: 2; 'Abd al-Rashīd 1958; see also Baevski 2007: 30–31; Siyāqī 1989: 7–9.

[8] Schimmel 1983: 69n. For further details on Qatrān's dictionary, see Baevski 2007: 31–43; and Siyāqī 1989: 14–16. For his poetic career, see Storey and de Blois 1992: 214–19; and Rypka and Jahn 1968: 194.

[9] Quoted in Baevski 2007: 33; and Siyāqī 1989: 16. Nāsir-i Khusrau's *Safarnāma* has been translated into English by Wheeler M. Thackston as *Nāser-e Khosraw's Book of Travels* (1986). For a recent study of his life and works, see Hunsberger 2000.

[10] Cf. the similar point made by McGregor 2003: 943–44, regarding *Tuḥfat al-Hind.*

[11] On Munjīk, see Storey and de Blois 1992: 197–8. On Daqīqī, see Arberry 1994:

41–3; and Browne 1997: vol. 1, 459–62.

[12] This is attested in the fourteenth-century *Farhang-i Zafāngūyā* (see Nazir Ahmad's introduction to Ibrāhīm 1989: 9). For further details on all three of these *farhangs* and a discussion of debates surrounding their authenticity, see Baevski 2007: 43–46. See also Siyāqī 1989: 10–12.

[13] Asadi Tusi 1957. See also Baevski 2007: 52–55; Siyāqī 1989: 16–28; and Storey 1984: 3–4.

[14] Siyāqī 1989: 8–9, 15.

[15] For details, see Zilli 2000; and Kinra 2008.

[16] Nakhjavānī 1962, 1964–76. For further details on *Siḥāḥ al-Furs*, see Baevski 2007: 55–57; Siyāqī 1989: 36–41; and Storey 1984: 5–8.

[17] On Rashīd al-Dīn's colorful life, career, and writings, see Colin Mitchell's very informative entry in Meri and Bacharach, 2006: 666–68.

[18] For details, see Baevski 2007: 57–61; Siyāqī 1989: 44–46; and Storey 1984: 9–11.

[19] Pollock 2008: 52, 2009: 934.

[20] Baevski 2007: 61–67; Siyāqī 1989: 47–49.

[21] Quoted in Siyāqī 1989: 47.

[22] On this, see Baevski 2007: 71–77; Siyāqī 1989: 32–36; and Storey 1984: 4–5.

[23] For a discussion of the influx of Persophone émigrés into India during this time, see Subrahmanyam 1992; Alam 2003.

[24] Mohiuddin 1960: 24.

[25] Hājib-i Khairāt Dihlavī 1973. For further details, see also Baevski 2007: 77–83; and Siyāqī 1989: 41–44.

[26] Siyāqī 1989: 66; Storey 1984: 13.

[27] For a recent study of the interplay between poetic language and scientific discourse during this period, see Ruymbeke 2007. For general information on the transmission of Greco-Hellenic knowledge systems in the Muslim world, see for instance Gutas 1998; Yücesoy 2009.

[28] Baevski 2007: 110–13; Siyāqī 1989: 59–66.

[29] Its title notwithstanding, Injū compiled most of the *Farhang* during Akbar's reign (1556–1605), at the specific request of the emperor himself, over a period of nearly thirty years. Sadly, as Injū laments in the preface to the *Farhang*, Akbar died before he could complete the work, and thus, out of courtesy for the newly reigning monarch at the time of its completion, it has come down to us bearing the name of Jahāngīr (r. 1605–28).

[30] Injū 1876: 4.

[31] Ibid., 3–4.

[32] Ibid., 5–6.

[33] The printed text reads *Shi'r-Nāma*, but I am assuming this was meant to read *Safar-Nāma*, one of Nāsir-i Khusrau's most well-known and celebrated works of prose.

[34] Injū 1876: 6.

[35] For a detailed examination of such mobility, see, for instance, Richards 1997; and Alam and Subrahmanyam 2007.

[36] Indeed, Injū's table of contents alone runs to some thirty-five pages in the 1876 edition (Injū 1876: 8–43). For a summary in English, see Blochmann 1868: 13.

[37] Tavakoli-Targhi 2001a: 104–7; 2001b. See also Kashani-Sabet 1999; Ahmadi 2004; Smith 2006, 2009; and Kinra 2007, 2011.

[38] Surūrī 1960–63: 7; also quoted in Blochmann 1868: 16. Surūrī, incidentally, seems to have come to India at some point during Shāh Jahān's reign (1628–58), only to die en route to Mecca some time thereafter (see the notice in *Mir'āt al-'Ālam*, a history of Aurangzeb's reign, quoted in Blochmann 1868: 17).

[39] Burhān 1939; 'Abd al-Rashīd Thattawī 1958. For details on both, see Blochmann 1868: 18–24.

[40] Burhān 1939: ب.

[41] Ibid.

[42] See the comments in 'Abd al-Rashid's preface (1958; vol. 1, 9–13). For further details, see also Blochmann 1868: 20–24.

[43] For general details on Ārzū's life and works, the best resource remains Khātūn 1987 (in Urdu). The English reader can refer to Abū al-Lays Siddīqī's introduction to *Muṣmir* (Ārzū 1991), as well as the discussions in Alam 2003 and Tavakoli-Targhi 2001a, 2001b. In Persian, see S. M. Ikram's introduction to *Dād-i Sukhan* (Ārzū 1974).

[44] It included, to name just a handful, such virtuoso literati as the poet and literary biographer (*tazkira-nawīs*) Brindāban Dās Khwushgū and the *khattrī* literary savant, patron, and "Lord of Traders" (*malik al-tujjār*), Anand Rām Mukhlis, as well as some of the greatest among the early generation of North Indian Urdu poets, including Mīrza Mazhar Jān-i Jānān, Khwāja Mīr Dard, and the grandiose and gregarious Mīrzā Muhammad Rafī' Sauda (1713–81). Ārzū was also the stepuncle of Mīr Taqī Mīr (1723–1810), another of the giants of seventeenth-century Urdu literature, who actually spent a somewhat tortured childhood in Ārzū's household after the latter took him in following the death of Mīr's parents. For an English translation of Mīr's account, see Naim 1999; for further details on their strained relationship, see Khātūn 1987: 59–70.

[45] For more details on Ārzū and Hazīn's rivalry, see, for instance, Alam 2003: 182–5; and Kirmani 1986: 28–31. For the larger context of Hazīn's career, see Kia 2009.

[46] Pollock 2008: 53–4; 2009: 954–6.

[47] As proof of this precept, Ārzū offered up a scathing critique of errors in Hazīn's own poetry, which he called *Tanbīh al-Ghāfilīn* ("A Warning to the Ignorant"; 1981). But again, lest we see this as pure nativism on Ārzū's part, we should also note that in other works of literary-philological commentary, such as *Dād-i Sukhan* ("Poetic Justice"; 1974) and *Sirāj-i Munīr* ("A Light on Munīr"; 1977), Ārzū staunchly defends a number of Iranian poets against the recriminations of a vocal Indian critic, Abū al-Barakāt Munīr Lahorī (1610–44). Much of this debate was couched in a larger conversation about whether or not the novelty of the era demanded a novel, "fresh" (*tāza*) approach to literature—a kind of Indo-Persian version of the so-called "quarrel between the ancients and moderns" going on in Europe at exactly the same historical moment. Ārzū's philology and his literary criticism are thus deeply intertwined, while his overall perspective was explicitly historicist and cosmopolitan, rather than synchronic and parochial. For more details on these debates about early modern Indo-Persian *tāza-gū'ī* ("speaking the fresh"), and Ārzū and Munīr's roles in them, see Kinra 2007, 2011.

[48] For details on all of these, see 'Abdullah 1967.

[49] Mukhlis 1993.

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